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AUCTION BRIDGE CRIMES

**A Satirical Arraignment of Twenty Common
Faults of Our Partners, With Illustrative
Hands Showing the Nature of the Of-
fenses and Their Unfortunate Re-
sults, all Carefully Indexed for
Quick Reference; also a
Composite Scoring Ta-
ble and the Latest**

**By
JAY A. GOVE**

LAWS OF THE GAME

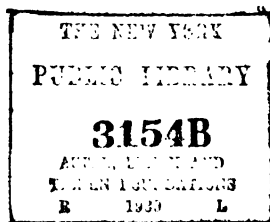
(Volume 1 — Polite Knavery)

**R. F. Fenno & Company,
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Auction Bridge Crimes.

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CRIME No. I

"I think this is simply awful! I haven't had a decent hand all evening!"

Peculiar, isn't it, how the cards run?

Unfortunate, likewise that we can't always have all the clothes we want, wear diamonds, ride in automobiles, and find competent maids whenever our jewels leave!

But somehow matters don't work out that way. It's always the undeserving who get the best things of life; always the poor players who hold the best cards. The good fortune of the hopelessly incompetent is forever amazing and discouraging us; indeed, at cards, we have a maxim about beginner's luck. But those of us who really understand the game have to *play* for the tricks we win at auction bridge, just as we are requested—nay, even urged—to *pay* for what we eat and wear. It isn't fair, of course, but it's life—fate perhaps.

Therefore, this indictment. Really though, indicting the grumbler involves consider-

able unnecessary work. He's hardly worth it. At worst, he's only a mosquito in crime that buzzes from table to table, or from chair to chair at the foot table—yes, usually there—making other people unhappy. He whines his little whine, stings his little sting and then, fortified by more bad blood, is gloomily on his way, again to play imaginary martyr to imagined wrongs.

How sorry he is for himself! And what an excellent publicity agent his misfortune has! Why, you can distinctly hear his monotonous droning above every other noise in the room—and those Gabriel sisters don't usually take a back seat for anybody, either!

There is an industrious official in "The Mikado," who gives considerable thought to making the punishment fit the crime. Usually he succeeds pretty well—well enough at least, to occasion the wish that he might sometimes be invited to pass sentence on auction bridge criminals. But not even he could better express average sentiment or inclination respecting the grumbler than did a mother, who, after an evening of ineffectual

verbal swatting at this kind of pest, remarked, homeward bound, to her appreciative husband:

"Oh, how I did want a hairbrush and an opportunity!"

But it would have been too late. The opportunity existed when the man was a boy, and it belonged to his mother. If hairbrushes were known to her family, their value at least was only half understood. Now, the son's an incorrigible; it's as natural for him to whine over auction bridge adversities as it is for a kitten to meouw for milk. He has the habit, and a cure involves the same process as amputating a rooster's crow or removing the bark from a dog.

Making the most of one's cards is a great deal like making the most of one's job. There are several ways of handling both. The player who sits tight, watches the cards down to the thirteenth in all the suits and confidently swoops on the last trick of the hand with a winning six-spot that the leader had forgotten, is the exception. *But it's an old oaken, iron-bound, moss covered cinch*

that he doesn't make six-spots win tricks by being dissatisfied with what he has.

However, playing the game, in the grumbler's opinion, has nothing to do with it—oh, no; the fellow's simply lucky. And, anyway, one must hold at least reasonably good cards to make the playing interesting, mustn't he? Otherwise, the game, or the job, or whatever it is, might just about as well be abandoned.

It doesn't occur to this kind of player that *deuces win a great many tricks at auction bridge*. He forgets that when he played nullos, the most dangerous cards he held—the ones which it was the hardest to transform into *losers*—were the intermediate ones, the same sixes and sevens and eights and nines which now he scorns. No, he must have the aces and kings and queens and jacks, and even the jacks are a little too far down the list. He wants the sure tricks; the cards that play themselves. And he is moodily disconsolate, often with commanding small cards in his hand, as a result of refusing to study the game sufficiently to learn how to

make such cards win. That, you know, is work, and the poor fellow has been working all day—working just as he plays auction bridge, probably.

The grumbler's grumble but reflects the man. And this reflecting of our real selves is a card playing characteristic of all of us. *If Henry Jekyll sits down at an auction bridge table it is usually only to warm the chair for Edward Hyde.*

CRIME No. II

"I don't play by rule; I just use my own judgment."

This is a common, but highly dangerous auction bridge criminal. His habitat is the progressive game; his diversion robbing other people of enjoyment. He often bobs up in the shank of the evening, when your score begins to give promise of winning your *first* prize of the season. And it is his delight then, in your moment of rapture, calmly to sit down opposite you and gently hiss in your ear:

"You know, partner, I don't play according to rule; I use my own judgment."

Deep down inside something goes thump! Fear possesses you. But you smile sweetly, blithely disclaim interest in rules, lie whitely concerning your desire to win, and, inwardly sighing, resignedly cease to conjecture whether the prize is a pair of silk stockings you so much need or merely a bunch of artificial flowers.

The play is on. Matters go smoothly. You begin to take hope — in homeopathic doses. But during the third game comes justification of your fear. The opponents win the contract with a reckless no-trump bid. It is The Criminal's lead. You had bid a spade, but when the no-trump had been declared had lapsed into *significant silence*. Your conscienceless partner holds two spades, ace and deuce. But he does not play by rule; he plays the deuce.

And what happens? Only this: You have the king, queen and a string of smaller spades, but no other re-entry. When the ace wins the second trick, and, incidentally, clears the suit, there is no way of getting you in again. The spades, save for the two tricks, go to waste—discarded on the declarer's cards. You have been held up and robbed with an ace in the hands of a lunatic!

Instead of setting the contract for 100 to 150, which was what you hoped might be done, your robber-partner has presented the declarer with gamé and rubber. He didn't

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mean to do it—of course not. He merely used his judgment.

But he has ample company in crime. Murderers, builders who select wall paper for apartment houses, embezzlers, those who start arguments about responsibility for war, forgers, young women who marry old men, swindlers, end-seat squatters on street cars, highwaymen, theater patrons who impose the atmosphere of the bar on their neighbors, wife beaters, persons who wear horn-rimmed window glasses—these all use their own judgment, and in their several characteristic ways demonstrate to and on the rest of us their emancipation from constraining conventionality. They ignore the lesson taught by the doctors and lawyers, who have been wise enough to provide against mistakes by obtaining for their judgment the benefit of advance legalization.

Yes, we have all met the auction bridge player who is superior to rules. Indeed, we know him well, because—well, because he is omnipresent. He never plays by rule; he plays by sufferance. His bids are from faith

and his leads are from hope. He is less valuable on the whole than a cigar store Indian, which, although also wooden-headed, usually is worth wiring down.

Our player suffers from a mania, superinduced by chronic egotistical gout. When he wins, he promptly assumes his favorite, virtuous, you-see-what-your-rules-amount-to air; when he loses—oh, well, the cards were all against him. But the true spirit of the game, the co-operative side—that which really makes it worth while—he declines to understand. His principle is “I do all of my thinking during business hours,” which, of course, is only another way of saying that he is a second dummy in the game.

Cases of this sort are usually hopeless. They are one of the strongest arguments for the perpetuation of capital punishment.

CRIME No. III

"Well, the ace can take only one trick; I guess I'd better get it in while I have a chance."

Paradoxical though it may seem, caution constantly commits crimes at auction bridge. It begets a certain sort of puerile preparedness that leads to disaster. It preaches conservatism, but practices extravagance. It stands pat on what it sees in hand and, human-like, refuses to recognize that it is near-sighted. It religiously sacrifices chances for game on the altar of fulfilled contract. *But it makes its aces*—you bet it does! right at the outset, if possible!—and then it sighs, oh, so self-satisfiedly, and announces:

"It's up to you now, partner; I've done all I can."

Of course, you who really understand the game know that the possibilities of a hand are never exhausted when the high cards are played, but there is not a nut-cracker made that would stand the strain of developing fissures large enough to permit this truth to

be forced into *some* craniums. A trick forever will be a trick in the opinion of many players. It's so written in their creeds and to question is to be agnostic. So what's the use?

And yet—well, there are conditions and beliefs which so provoke one as to make their condemnation a positive pleasure. There are times when one would almost willingly die battering his head futilely against the rock-ribbed Gibraltar of human conceit. Hence we proceed.

It is a strange fact that the particular type of auction bridge incorrigible under consideration is constantly driven by motives of penury to make himself a veritable giver of gifts. To save one trick, he *unwittingly* sacrifices two. It isn't philanthropy; it's bridge myopia. He is doing his duty as he sees it, but, like the miser, all the while he is grabbing for what is in sight, he is cheating himself.

The plain truth is that there is no more definite measure of value for an ace, or any other card, than there is for a dollar. For

instance, if the sun shines this afternoon and the farmers feel like coming to town, and numerous other conditions, including those in Europe, are favorable, 100 cents tomorrow morning may buy even more than two dozen really fresh eggs. But is that any assurance that the same 100 cents will buy one-third as many eggs a year hence? Hardly!

Well, as good players know, the situation is similar in the matter of card values. An ace sometimes is worth one trick, and sometimes worth four or five tricks, and sometimes it is a liability.

But who has not had the sort of partner who never takes market conditions into consideration? Who has not, at no-trump, been forced to sit facing an alleged human being, who opens ace suits from the top, regardless of conditions—perhaps even leads two aces and kings right out, and so clears the way for a clean, easy sweep of the suits by the opponents? And who, thus conditioned, has not hoped, since there is no escape from it in this life, that the recording angel makes

liberal allowance for auction bridge martyrdom?

A difficulty which Our Criminal never overcomes is the tendency to underestimate the value of small cards. How many, for instance, credit the *seven* with potential power sufficient to wreck an ace-king-queen-ten combination in the hands of a declarer? And yet, it is a very simple matter so to distribute the cards that this combination, even when supported by the eight-six-five-four-three, a total of nine cards in the suit, can be fully developed *only* by a finesse. If the finesse is not taken, the seven blocks the suit! Yet, there are players, who, holding normally much more powerful blocking cards, play them out at the first opportunity, on the theory that they can take only one trick!

These usually are the players who think auction bridge is not much of a game. Such persons have a value, however, which has been overlooked. They ought to furnish endless inspiration for the comic artist who draws pictures of the sad individual who is always taking the joy out of life.

CRIME No. IV

"Why, I always cover an honor with an honor! That's one of the first rules I learned in bridge."

You are sitting, let us assume, at the head table of your auction bridge club. You have an *exceptionally* gratifying score—one, indeed, that gives promise of starting you on your season with the first winning you have made since the club's organization. You have just survived a round with the most careless player of your acquaintance and are congratulating yourself that the worst is over, for one evening at least, when—

It is on the fourth or fifth round of a three no-trump contract, during the play of the fourth deal. The score is close and an opponent has won the bidding, but you have *hope* of setting him. That set, you figure, will give you enough advantage in the score to permit you to retain your head-table seat.

The declarer, you are certain, will make a blunder if he has a chance, and conditions

seem very rapidly to be shaping themselves to provide the chance.

Ah, ha! there it is now! He leads a jack of diamonds out of his own hand up toward an ace and two small cards in dummy. You know his playing well enough to understand that he is "trying his luck," as he expresses it—his suit is stopped and he wants to know where the cards are; perhaps he even hopes he may be able to gain control in one lead. You are convinced your partner is an important factor in the situation and you have visions of making good the *established hearts* which you have been carefully nursing. Thus you congratulate yourself, when—

Your partner hesitates. It develops later that he held the queen and two small diamonds. It develops now that there has arisen the one situation in auction bridge in which you can depend upon him to make a given play. The knave is on the table, the queen is in your partner's hand, and through the caverns of his noctivagant mind echoes an old maxim of the game which dates back to the days before auction.

"Cover an honor with an honor," says your partner, and forthwith does, in a spirit of duty performed which is nothing if not characteristic. But there's still a chance for you; the declarer may not play the ace from dummy. He is hesitating and you are beginning to take hope. Then—

He reaches suddenly out, picks up the ace, lays it on the queen, and looks anxiously at you!

You had perhaps unconsciously frowned when The Criminal played the queen, having previously been desperately endeavoring to influence his play by offering him mental suggestion. Now, you sigh, delaying to the limit of propriety the surrendering of your *singleton* king!

Your opponent is jubilant. His knave has lured forth your partner's guarded queen; his ace, on the same trick, has dropped your king, and he has made good, as too soon is demonstrated, the ten, nine, seven, five and four of diamonds in his own hand.

And then?

Well, doubtless the critical situation is not relieved by the declarer's inability to recognize that he has been the fortunate beneficiary of your partner's misplay. He unblushingly credits himself, or at least his luck, with having miraculously transformed an unpromising hand into a big winner.

"My!" he exclaims to his partner, "how nicely those diamonds did fall! Whoever would have imagined I could have taken six straight tricks in that suit!"

The appeal is successful. "Especially," compliments his partner, "when both the king and queen were against you! I think you did wonderfully well!"

Ugh-h-h! How we apples swim! And how greatly do those of us who can't swim desire, just at this trying moment, to call forth our most dignified and freezing tone and use it, rapier-like, for the admission of a little light into benighted brains!

There you sat with those four good hearts, lacking a re-entry to establish them, and opposite you sat a partner with a heart to lead and a stopper in the opponents' best suit

—a partner who surrendered the *one* chance you had to set the contract because he didn't know how to apply the only maxim of auction bridge with which he was familiar! Wouldn't it wilt you? One hundred and seventy-five points lost—gone—given away—on one simple little play. The boneheads are not all in the baseball business!

So you *think*, but what you *say* is that your opponent certainly was most fortunate and that the falling of the diamonds was most unfortunate for you and your partner. Thus poor playing and poor winning both go unrebuked.

There are some auction bridge maxims that all our partners seem to know and that even the poorest of them blindly follow without regard for the fact that the exception often is as important as the rule. At cards, as in grammar, one may fill an entire living room or parlor with disgust by one little mistake.

It may be of value to know that the past tenses of verbs are sometimes formed by adding "ed," but it is equally as important to

know that "goed," "runned," "shooted" and other similar exceptions are not considered good form outside the nursery. It is doubtless also worth while to know that plurals are usually formed by adding "s," but this rule does not include such common articles of diet as the peach, the potato and the tomato.

Covering an honor with an honor sometimes is good play, but often it merely is evidence that one's crime is impulsive rather than premeditated. A deliverance which all good players seek is from unreasoning partners who make this novice's maxim a hard and fast rule of auction bridge conduct. But then, to some folks, you know, that hope is dearest which is inutile.

CRIME No. V

"I suppose I ought to have returned to my original suit, partner, but I didn't want to take the bid away from you."

What consideration! What deference to the feelings of a friend! What nonsense! What misunderstanding—yes, what ignorance—of the basic principles of auction bridge this wishy-washy expression confesses!

A building is burning. The watchman sees the fire, but stands inactive. A boy rushes up.

"Why don't you turn in an alarm?" the child breathlessly asks.

"Why, I—I—I don't know," the watchman replies; "may—maybe the boss might not like it if I did."

And maybe he wouldn't! But probably, inasmuch as he employs a watchman, he thinks he is providing against just such an emergency.

And maybe, too, there are some auction bridge players who would rather "go it

alone," in the face of certain defeat, than permit their partners to play a hand occasionally, but the game is not generally nor successfully conducted on that theory. Playing with persons of ordinary intelligence and average card sense, it is fairly safe to assume that they want to win the hand, the game and the rubber, and that they are sufficiently human to entertain fleeting thoughts of homicide when any of these ends is needlessly sacrificed.

Alphonse and Gaston have never successfully played auction bridge. Neither has the person who grows faint at the thought of taking a bid from his partner. He's like the man who has never taken a kiss from his sweetheart. The best he has ever done probably is to hold hands.

Auction bridge is a *partnership* game. Moreover, the partnership succeeds or fails in accordance with the recognition given to partnership interests. It's a good deal like matrimony in this respect; one-sided sacrifices do not constitute co-operation.

"But," says The Criminal, who is the subject of this eulogy, "I don't have any difficulty when I hold *good* cards. It's the *poor* hands that cause all my trouble."

Of course it is! And so do hard times cause difficulties in business and under-done veal spoil the dinner. A youngster, who has not yet forgotten the qualms of conscience and other parts of his anatomy resulting from his first cigarette, could successfully bid a hand that was composed of aces and kings! But there are forty-four other cards in the deck, and it is these that make auction bridge an interesting game.

The time one most needs a co-operating partner is when there does not *seem* to be any declaration on which the two hands can advantageously combine; when the indications are that the cards are against you, and when the opponents, having found their suit, are sailing right along like a bare-handed housewife bound for the table with a painfully hot platter.

These are the times when knowledge of the principles of bidding is profitable—when

it is a joy to know and to understand the delicate shades of meaning of the unique language of auction. Warnings are sounded, hints of new possibilities are gently struck, and lo! out of the ensuing tense silence comes a sudden peal, as of cathedral chimes, inviting to victory. You had those spades all the time, but it would have cost you game to learn it if there had been no co-operation in bidding—no language in auction.

And now we are down to bedrock on this subject of the compassionate player who would rob his partner of a game to avoid robbing him of a bid. Wrap the truth in as much tinsel as you wish, tie it with all the ribbon left from last year's Christmas presents—it remains the truth. The player who ought to take his partner out and does not is very much like the cook who ought to have taken the cake out and did not. "Justifiable manslaughter, provoked by ignorance or gross carelessness," should be the coroner's verdict.

Yes, when a defendant pleads, "I didn't want to take the bid away from you," he is

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usually trying to hide a mountain of incomprehension behind a sliver of sentiment. The *fundamental* fact is that he doesn't know what to do; *he doesn't understand the game.*

And the only cure for such a malady is conscientious study.

CRIME No. VI

"I know I should have declared my suit, but I was afraid to bid so high."

Some persons think that the peace-at-any-price movement is new. They're mistaken. It was the first crime of the race. Adam committed it when he bit the forbidden fruit to please his wife, and latterly the idea has been perpetuated through divers media, but chiefly through auction bridge. The far-famed yellow streak in human nature responds as blue litmus paper to acid when put to the card table test. Indeed, this test reveals the taint in natures often otherwise analyzed as free from it.

What there is about thirteen printed paste-board cards to uproot courage from the souls of ordinarily self-reliant mortals it would seem difficult on first consideration to say, but that the phenomenon occurs there can be no question. One trouble with auction bridge appears to be that persons who know perfectly well, *as a theoretical proposition*, what action certain situations demand, lose their

assurance in attempted practical utilization of the conventions. Like the sponge, they absorb readily, but collapse under pressure.

In a case requiring no thought—merely a mechanical application of thoroughly understood principle—they have no trouble. But if conditions are slightly varied, scrambled eggs do the reasoning. If the dealer declares a spade and second hand doubles, third hand passing, the fourth player in average circumstances will bid no-trump if he has the spades stopped, or, lacking stoppers, will declare his best suit, if he has a good one. But it seems to be a much more complex problem for many players if, after the double, the doubler's partner is confronted by a hand in which the best declaration is a weak minor suit.

"Gracious," The Criminal thinks, "bid two on ace-nine-eight-five-deuce of diamonds without another thing in my hand? Why, I simply don't dare!"

And then, aloud, "No-o-o bid."

Here is mental panic—forgetfulness of the well expressed truth that much of the bidding at auction bridge is *bidding on bidding* rather

than on cards. The dealer has declared one spade. The second hand, by doubling, has said:

"I can't take care of spades, but I have the other suits protected."

Fourth hand realizes that there can be no question about what his own best suit is and that, not being able to stop the spades, he is in duty bound to name that best suit. Then why should he hesitate to declare diamonds, even if he does have to bid on an ace to do it? Why? Why? Why?

It's because he can't unscramble eggs. It's because he forgets. It's because the thought of possibly having to play a two-bid squeezed the courage out of his sponge-like soul. Yet he knows, even as he passes, that he has done the wrong thing. And when his unfortunate partner finally wins the contract, and The Criminal is about to expose his perfidy by laying down the dummy, he seeks to forestall deserved criticism by apologetically remarking:

"I know I should have declared my dia-

monds, but I was simply afraid to bid on them!"

He knows what he should have done! Yes, he noes!

Caution is an exceedingly desirable and highly underrated virtue, but caution isn't cowardice, as the United States has several times diplomatically demonstrated. Overbidding is one of the worst and most inexcusable offenses, but declaring one's best suit in response to a partner's demand is *not* overbidding; it's merely performing a duty. Knowing that a situation calls for a definite declaration and yet withholding that declaration because of inability to see over the tops of the cards, amounts, in auction bridge, to plain treason to one's partner.

CRIME No. VII

"It was too bad we couldn't have won that time; I had such a good helping hand, too."

Of all the bacilli of irascibility which are bred of auction bridge, there is none more waspish than the comment of a reckless bidder after his partner has gone to defeat under the load inflicted on him by an unjustified and undesired contract.

There is a genus of player who always is anointing his friends with acid criticism perfumed with politeness; who clothes discomforting comment with seeming charity; whose compliments always taper down into a sting. He is forever setting an impossible goal for his associate by putting valuations on his hand which are as fictitious as Brummagem plate. And he never realizes, even after the cards have been laid down, face upward, one after another, under his very nose, that he is in any way responsible for his partnership difficulties.

"It's too bad we couldn't have won that time," he says; "I had such a good helping hand, too!"

Have you ever analyzed one of those good *helping* hands—analyzed it after your forced, lead-indicating bid has been inexcusably mistaken for a *free* bid and been lifted to such dizzying heights that you are almost faint when the bidding is ended; analyzed it as you studied a possible means of saving one or two tricks from your very decidedly pasteboard hand? If so, what follows may help to heal an old, frequently reopened wound.

Permit the cards to tell the story. They are distributed, let us say, between your partner and yourself, in some such manner as this:

The Criminal:

Spades: King, jack, six, trey.

Hearts: Queen, seven, four.

Clubs: Jack, eight, deuce.

Diamonds: Queen, nine, deuce.

Your hand:

Spades: Seven, five.

Hearts: Ace, ten, five.

Clubs: Ace, king, queen, nine.

Diamonds: Ace, eight, seven, trey.

You bid one no-trump. Second hand and your partner pass. Third hand bids two spades. You pass and so does the player on your left, but your irrepressible partner bids two no-trump, and later three no-trump, even after you have warned him. The contract stands at three and The Criminal lays down his hand, announcing:

"Well, partner, I'm right on the job this time; have spades stopped twice and two other suits stopped once!"

That *sounds* good—until you *see* the "stoppers." Then you make the mental comment that some persons must have obtained their ideas of the value of guarded kings and queens from reading ancient history.

You hope this time—just this once, you know—there will be a favorable distribution of the cards in the hands of your opponents, but then you remember that spade strength has been declared on your right and you have a premonition that the king and jack of spades in dummy are principally valuable for

following suit. However, you later discover, it isn't as bad as it might have been.

The hands develop thus:

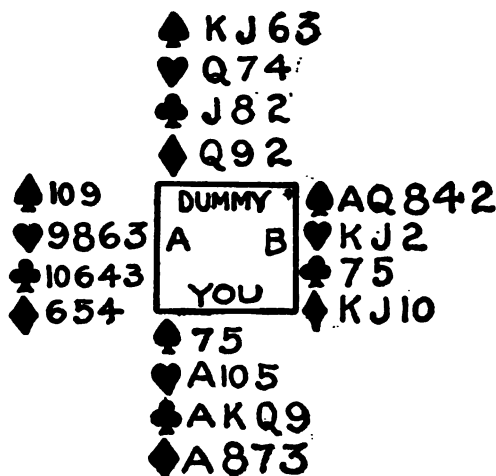


Illustration No. 1.

B holds the major tenace in spades over dummy's minor tenace and holds *fourchette* over dummy's queens of hearts and diamonds. The "guarded" queens are trembling on their thrones. The "twice stopped" spade suit is once stopped if the hand is properly

played. And yet on cards such as these The Criminal *trebles* his partner's bid!

"It is such a good helping hand!"

Dummy's trouble was that he did not become a dummy soon enough. The five honors among his cards did for the *whole* hand what carefully applied powder and rouge do for some women's sallow complexions. Really, the hand consists of twelve losing cards. Yet such holdings appear to careless observers, *many of whom* sit at auction bridge tables, to be good; they inspire unwarranted confidence.

What is needed by our provoking partners who are tempted to judge a hand from its general appearance—needed at least pending the development of the habit of analyzing values—is a little more pessimism, a little more caution, a little more inclination to suspect trouble. In the long run, especially following a declaration of strength on one's left, such suspicion is not unprofitable.

Bidding against a reliable competitor who already has proclaimed strong holdings in the product over which you are disputing is

usually poor business judgment. It is difficult to make a contract profitable when very many of its essentials are controlled by rivals who desire to realize on their advantage. Placing dependence on minor tenaces and "guarded" queens, moreover, puts temptation in the partner's way; it invites him to *infanticide*.

CRIME No. VIII

"I expect I raised you a little bit more than I should have, but I just couldn't let them have it for hearts."

There is an old saw to the effect that the way to know a person is to *live* with him. Divorce court activities prove the efficacy of the test, but there are several rather obvious objections to its general adoption. A quicker and somewhat less dangerous method of procedure therefore is to be advised, and one of the best of such methods is to engage the candidate at auction bridge. There are few better tests of disposition than a persistent run of what the devotees of the game call *poor cards*.

Unsuspected traits of character are thus often developed, and the apparently most unselfish persons will now and then confess that they "just couldn't let the opponents have the declaration for hearts." However, it is not so much the grasping spirit of the individual player as the length to which the tendency to

overbid is carried that makes it a matter for discussion in this crime catalogue.

With the partner who refuses to surrender to the opposition when he has a *legitimate* reason for his persistence most players will have no quarrel, but the trouble is that the desire to win the contract often far outruns justification. And taking unreasonable chances is eventually no more profitable in auction bridge than in matrimony, or when one is crossing a busy city street.

Original bids, or subsequent bids by the original bidder, which cannot be squared with any card convention are not at all uncommon, but the error which probably causes even greater losses than these is that made by partners in *unreasonably* increasing the contract.

The host and hostess at a recent card party were prevented from playing by the inability of one of the couples to attend. They spent the evening profitably in watching the varying styles of play of their guests, and particularly in noting the cards on which different bids were made.

In one case they saw a dealer assort the following hand, on which he bid one spade:

Spades: Ace, king, eight, six, five.

Hearts: Queen, deuce.

Clubs: Queen, jack, ten.

Diamonds: Jack, four, deuce.

He probably counted the spades good for four tricks and the clubs good for one, or five in all, and figured his partner, as is customary in this circle, for two tricks additional, making seven, or just enough, thus liberally estimated, to justify his bid.

Second hand bid two hearts. The dealer's partner raised the spade bid to two. A glance at his cards showed the following hand:

Spades: Queen, jack, nine, seven, trey.

Hearts: Ten, nine, five.

Clubs: Four, trey, deuce.

Diamonds: Eight, trey.

The observer suppressed a gasp and thought the bidder well out of a bad corner when the fourth hand raised his partner's heart bid, offering three for the contract. The dealer had bid his limit at the outset and

was compelled to rely on his partner for all the increases, so he passed.

The second player, of course, passed the bid up to the dealer's partner and, greatly to the observer's surprise, that venturesome veteran in crime very promptly announced, "Three spades." This was doubled, and as the declarers had no suit to which to escape, the hand was played at the spade declaration.

A glance at the cards will show the *hopelessness* of the contract placed on the declarer.

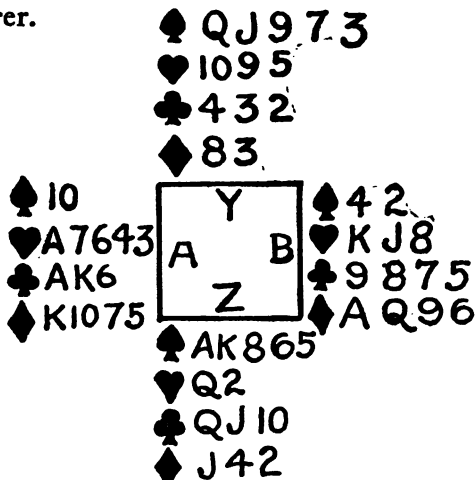


Illustration No. 2.

Z (the declarer) is certain to lose two tricks each in hearts, diamonds and clubs even with the most ordinary playing on the part of his opponents, so the contract is set from the beginning. Y has risked and lost 200 points without a possible chance of making game. On the cards which he held, he was bidding to *lose*; there is no other possible way of figuring it. But, knowing hearts would go game if the heart bidders were allowed the contract, he could not resist the temptation to defy fate.

He has forgotten that his partner had previously counted on him for two tricks. He hasn't even those two, yet he *twice* raises the bid, thereby promising to take four tricks *in his own hand*. Bidding such as this is hopeless; its only justification is insanity.

The situation here described, however, is not exceptional. It arises several times at every meeting of the average auction bridge club. Some players seem to forget that their hands are partly bid upon—up to one or two tricks—when their partners make a declaration and that hands which do not contain

more than two quick tricks (aces and kings) generally do not justify supporting bids.

A short story was once written about a dealer in antiques who started two customers bidding in competition for some rare article of merchandise. They proved to be husband and wife who wanted to surprise one another. They succeeded! This sort of surprise is not unusual in auction bridge, and it helps more conservative players to win many prizes. As between partners who persistently underbid their hands and those who overbid, no sane player would hesitate in making a choice. Both will rob him, but one is a petty thief; the other a bandit.

CRIME No. IX

"It is too bad it turned out that way; luck was against us. But I couldn't have done otherwise, and it wouldn't have made the slightest difference what I played, anyway."

Post-mortems are for the benefit of the living; they do the dead no good. And that is one reason the little snatches of conversation between the playing of one auction bridge hand and the dealing of another sometimes are so interesting. They often go to prove that the patient has experienced euthanasia. But the survivors, not the subject of the inquest, profit most from the information.

Real students seldom are standpatters; our reactionaries, whether at auction or in politics, usually are recruited from the ranks of the intolerant. Let us illustrate, if a truth so obvious needs illustration:

Mirandy and her husband were playing the other evening against a two-heart contract.

They failed to set it, although Mirandy's better half was of the opinion that they should have done so. He hinted as much, and possibly a little more, to Mirandy, but she couldn't see it. Her husband—oh, pshaw! the reader probably has seen man and wife play auction or take dancing lessons together, so the recital of the conversation would be neither entertaining or illuminating.

But, as sometimes happens in card games, there was another man at this table and the husband, as some husbands sometimes will, called on him for aid. Being a bachelor and inexperienced in the handling of delicate domestic situations, he undertook to tell Mirandy wherein she had erred, thereby erasing his name from one woman's dinner invitation list. For the purpose of making his illustration clear, this volunteer martyr laid out the cards about as they were when the bidding began, the result of this part of his task being somewhat as follows:

	♠ 6 3 2	
	♥ J 5 3	
	♣ A 10 9	
	♦ J 10 5 4	
♠ 8 7 5		♠ A K Q 4
♥ Q 4 2		♥ 9 7
♣ Q J 8 6 5 3		♣ 7 4 2
♦ 8		♦ A 9 7 6
	♠ J 10 9	
	♥ A K 10 8 6	
	♣ K	
	♦ K Q 3 2	

Illustration No. 3.

As the hand had been played, Mirandy's husband, instead of opening his wife's declared suit (spades), had led the eight of diamonds and when Mirandy got in with the ace she evidenced her criminal instinct by leading three rounds of spades before returning the diamond lead. The declarer's opponents therefore won one trick in diamonds (ace), three tricks in spades (king, queen, ace), and one by ruffing diamonds—a total of five, or *one less* than enough to set the two-heart contract.

The man who undertook to explain to Mirandy what she ought to have done began:

"Your husband, of course, knew what your suit was, but instead of opening it he—"

"Yes!" exclaimed Mirandy, "he led diamonds! And it isn't the *first time* either that he has ignored my bid in leading."

"But he didn't ignore your bid," countered the martyr; "he was merely trying to take advantage—"

"Take advantage of me! That's exactly it! He wanted to do some fool thing with his own cards when I sat over here holding four perfectly good tricks. Of course, I took them in as soon as I got the chance! Why *shouldn't* I? Weren't we playing a *suit* declaration and didn't it look as if my honors might be trumped almost any minute?"

The teacher gulped.

"If you will look at your partner's hand," he said somewhat impatiently, "you'll see that it's practically worthless unless he can win tricks with his *trumps*. He led diamonds instead of spades to tell you that it would help if you would lead a diamond right back to

him. When he thus deliberately refrained from leading your suit you must have realized he had a good reason."

"Huh! you don't know him as well as I do," commented Mirandy, "and then, anyway, how did I know he wasn't *void* of my suit, or how did he know that the declarer or dummy didn't hold the ace of diamonds?"

The arbiter began to realize he had undertaken a bigger contract than winning a two-heart bid, but hubby, fortunately, came to the rescue.

"My dear!" he said, emphasizing exasperation, which the tone of his voice adequately expressed, by deeply wrinkling his brow, "I would suggest that you permit the explanation to continue."

No one heard The Criminal's reply, but every one at the table saw it.

"The point is just this," resumed the martyr, now anxious to conclude: "if you had returned your partner's diamond lead previous to exhausting spades, you could have given your husband three chances to trump before—"

"Why, I led his diamonds back to him, didn't I? And we took two diamond tricks, one with the ace and one by trumping, didn't we?"

The patience of the friend was exhausted.

"Here," he exclaimed, picking up the eight of diamonds, "let's play the hand; that will show you."

"Your husband leads this diamond, dummy plays the four, you play the ace and the declarer puts on the deuce. That's one trick for you.

"Now, if you lead back the nine of diamonds *right away*, your husband gets a chance to trump. Then he puts *you* in again with a spade, you lead another diamond for him to trump, he returns the spade, you lead diamonds again, and so on, alternating the two leads as long as your cards last.

"If you had adopted this plan of playing, you would have taken *seven* tricks, which would have set us for two. Your husband merely was trying to show you that team work is more profitable than the playing of hands individually and—"

"But that isn't the only point," interrupted the vindicated husband. "There's such a thing as being *too* anxious to play winning cards and that's always been one of Mirandy's chief faults. She is so everlastingly afraid some one will trump her aces and kings that she plumps them right down on the board, one after another, at the very first opportunity. Then she seems to feel her duty's performed and is willing to let her partner take *his* turn. The possibility of using her high cards for re-entries—"

"Finished down there at the foot table?" called the hostess. "We're waiting for you."

So that is as far as Mirandy's lesson in auction bridge was followed. However there are other Mirandys—persons who play against their partners as well as their opponents—who have not been so unfortunate as to have one of their chief card crimes thus exposed in public.

CRIME No. X

"I hope you didn't depend too much on my bidding when you doubled. You see, I was stretching the value of my hand a little."

Napoleon Bonaparte fought the battle of Waterloo expecting momentarily to be reinforced by Grouchy. Grouchy, however, did not appear. There are many of this kind of partners.

John Jones says he will pay his bill on the first of the month. Counting on John's promise, you pledge yourself to pay Jim Smith what you owe him. The first of the month comes, but John doesn't, consequently both you and Jim are disappointed and you say uncharitable things about persons who don't keep their word. Yet the experience is not an unusual one; there are many such promisers.

Pessimism, Presumption, Optimism and Prudence sit down to play a game of auction bridge. The bidding begins with Pessimism's pass. Presumption bids a spade and

Optimism says no-trump. Prudence (yourself, of course) has three small spades and pretty good cards in the other suits and so boosts Presumption one.

Pessimism, complying with the five-card-major-suit-take-out convention, goes to three hearts, but Presumption promptly bids three spades and Optimism defies fate by returning to no-trump. You have four sure tricks in your own hand against a no-trumper and Presumption has more than indicated spade strength. If he can take even *one* trick, the contract can be set. Moreover, the opponents have no suit to which to escape; if they bid four hearts, they certainly will be defeated. It looks easy, and accordingly Prudence doubles the three no-trump bid.

The result? Prudence's cards take four tricks, Presumption's *none*; hence Optimism just makes his bid, getting fifty honor points as bonus for fulfilling the contract—110 in all—when Prudence had figured to set him for at least 100. Nor is that the worst; Optimism considers a nonchalant comment or two about the skilful manner in which the

hand was played to be excusable. Thus barbarism follows established precedent by trailing in the footsteps of victory.

The real reason for Prudence's downfall? That's simple: Presumption merely didn't have a legitimate spade bid. He is one of those sub-normal players, you find, who cannot resist the alluring temptation to make a very loud noise about a little string of cards. He bids always on the theory that his suit *will become trump*, but never tells his partner what *his hand as a whole* will be worth in event of some other suit becoming trump, or in event of playing against a no-trumper.

"I hope you didn't depend too much on my bidding when you doubled," he says; "you see (yes, you see) I was stretching the value of my hand a little."

Now, getting the most out of the bidding of two hands at auction bridge is not unlike getting the most out of what is left of last night's banquet. Left-overs are assets, but they are not the sort of assets which will do for use on the evening when the auction bridge club is being entertained for dinner.

They have a definite value, but they also possess limitations; hash is not company diet.

Take this illustration: Suppose hubby calls up wifey some afternoon and inquires:

"Say, dear, what are we going to have for dinner tonight? If it's all right, I'd like to bring Bill out with me."

Wifey replies:

"Fine! I've enough food on hand for a regiment; I'd like to get rid of some of it."

Is hubby to be blamed if he decides this is a good time to pay off certain over-due social obligations and brings home with him the cashier, the boss, the book-keeper and the fellow who always beats him at kelly pool? And is wifey surprised when the caravan arrives? Of course, she's surprised.

"I hope you didn't depend too much on my bidding when you doubled," she says, as hubby trails the procession through the door; "you see, I was stretching the value of my hand a little."

Oh, no, it's to be conceded she doesn't say it exactly that way, but that's the idea back of her criticism, just the same.

One of the hardest points for some auction bridge players to concede is that the average original bid is a pledging of *definite aid* to one's partner as well as an offer to assume a contract. Such a player forgets the interpretation which others are likely to give to his bidding. He declares a heart, for instance, thereby announcing:

"I have two sure quick tricks in hearts, with at least five of the suit, and I also have one or two sure, quick outside tricks."

That's substantially what the bid is understood to mean and say but far too often what the bidder *intends* it shall mean is that "I have a hand which is *probably* good for one odd, *provided* hearts is the trump *and provided* my partner can give me average assistance." In other words, this irresponsible individual really doesn't put a value on his cards which will apply to them under *any* condition that may develop; he bids with mental reservations, and so misleads his partner. Prudence has many times been thus defeated.

What should be sought on first-round bidding, of course, is to show the quick trick possibilities of the hands. Informatory bidding, roughly speaking, is the pledging of aces and kings or their equivalents. These cards, as every one but our partners knows, ought usually to be good for tricks at *any* suit declaration or at no-trump, and equally as valuable in *defensive* as in *offensive* play. Definitely pledging them to one's associate enables him to bid with confidence. He may raise a previous bid, double an opponent, redouble an opponent's double, bid a suit of his own, or go to no-trump knowing that he will have real assistance, regardless of what the declaration may be. Information of this sort, despite unfortunately persisting notions to the contrary, is not conveyed by bids on long suits which are headed by queens and jacks. Such suits have their value, but they are the *left-overs* of the game, useful only under special, favorable conditions.

There is nothing about any of this that is new, novel or exciting. Indeed, it's old stuff, most of us know it well, but for some inex-

plicable reason there are still a few dark corners—corners where crime is hatched—into which the sunlight hasn't trickled.

The conventions of auction bridge are purposeful and reasonably definite. They make provision for all sorts of hands. They draw a sharp line between original and secondary and several other sorts of bids.

The first-round bid indicates tops of the suit; the second-round bid usually indicates length, but denies the tops. Legitimately used, these bids reduce the hazards of the game to a minimum. They are very simple, which probably is one reason why they are so greatly abused.

CRIME No. XI

"I didn't warn you because I couldn't see the sense of increasing an already bad bid by running the chance of making a worse one."

Receipt: Take of not over-ripe adults, four; of new, narrow cards, one or two packs; of folding card tables, one. Season liberally with the purpose to play auction bridge; mix well and isolate.

From the foregoing can be obtained more results than from any other formula known to the experienced housekeeper. It is a producer, according to the time, the conditions and the persons, of everything from ennui to ecstasy. In bestowal of its constant, sometimes pleasing, sometimes annoying, surprises it is quite as liberal as a charity fair grab-bag.

One of the annoying factors of the game is the otherwise usually rational player who refuses to warn his partner when the latter

has made a bid at which he will receive no assistance. *There are such players.* They have learned a system of procedure governing *original* declarations, and they cannot be convinced that this system requires frequent modification to meet the changing requirements of *secondary, forced and warning* bids. Although they do not hold a card of their partners' suits, they allow the bid to stand unless their hands contain suits which would justify *free* bids. They consider this conservative playing—and they're right.

The argument of such a conservative is that he would rather risk being set one or two tricks on his *partner's* bid than to increase the contract and run the chance of a possibly larger set in *his own* suit. Stated otherwise, and somewhat more bluntly, he's a caviller; he does not even credit his partner with sufficient good judgment to again change the bid if it is one not suited to his hand. Or, perhaps he prefers to have it said that it was his partner who was defeated. *There are such players.*

If a general disposes his army for an attack and assigns an important place to an officer whom he thinks is adequately equipped, but who really is in need of guns and men, the officer's obvious duty is to acquaint the general with the facts. Likewise, if a housewife invites company to her home, and so informs her maid, the latter's duty, knowing there is a shortage of provisions for proper entertainment, is to advise her employer. And there are maids who would do it—so the employment agencies report.

Well, what's the difference between the foregoing situations and that existing when one partner at auction bridge bids a suit in which the other cannot support him? What's the difference? Chiefly this: the general can court-martial his offending officer and the housewife can discharge her offending maid, but the abused partner must sit still and take what's given him.

"I didn't want to run the risk of making a bad matter worse," The Criminal explains, and etiquette decrees that silence should ensue.

Timidity, partner of an original heart bidder, recently held this inspiring hand:

Spades: Seven, six, trey, deuce.

Hearts: None.

Clubs: Ten, nine.

Diamonds: Jack, ten, nine, six, four, trey, deuce.

He allowed the heart bid to stand, and his partner was set. He was "afraid to bid two diamonds on nothing." After the hand had been played, it developed that his partner would have been just as well pleased to have known that he had diamond length. But he has been hiding his diamonds every night for so many years that he has the habit.

It happened that there were *nine* of that suit in the two hands, whereas there were only *six* hearts, and the division of the latter was such that they could not be forced *in time* to make the diamonds good.

A glance at the hand shows what justification of fear the declarer's partner had.

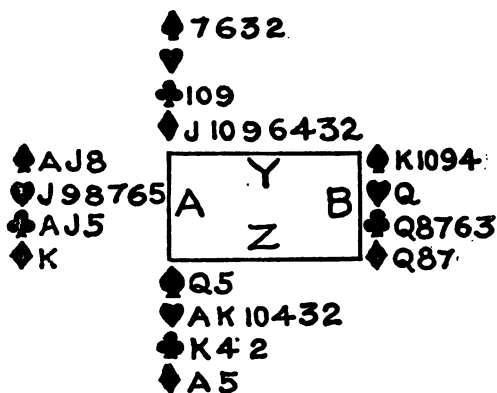


Illustration No. 4.

Most persons, having a choice in Y's or Z's place between fighting it out with A at hearts or "taking a chance" with diamonds, would probably not waste a great deal of time in reaching a decision. But the point is that in the actual game the heart bidder was given no alternative. And what was worse, Y's distressingly weak hand was exposed as dummy.

Successful management of cards, like successful conduct of a business, it is generally recognized, involves familiarity with two varying lines of activity. In the commercial sphere, these are production and salesman-

ship. The best product in the world would be of little value to those controlling it if they had no means of distribution. And so in auction bridge, making the most of good cards consists of much more than merely declaring the face value of one-half of the combined resources of two hands. The expert bidder, like the good merchandizer, studies the market.

One of the largest baking concerns has a nationally advertised product which it does not even attempt to sell in certain parts of the country, because there is no demand there for that sort of goods. Instead, in these sections, it pushes other lines. Expressed differently, it disposes of its strength to the best possible advantage. And weakness, be it noted, is sometimes its greatest resource, just as Y's weak diamonds—weak in the sense of absence of tops—represent the greatest strength of the combined Y-Z hands.

There's something akin to high finance in auction bridge strategy. Good bidders realize the game involves repeated attempts to establish monopolies. They accordingly

endeavor first to ascertain wherein, as between two hands, their opportunity lies and then to press what advantage they have to the utmost. Having gained the upper hand, they squeeze to the limit of their ability.

But it is team work that counts. The game cannot be satisfactorily played if one partner fails to do his part. And it is just as essential that a partner be warned against dangerous bids as that he be assisted with those that are advantageous.

It is possible, but unlikely, that there once was a railroad agent who knew that a bridge was burning and yet allowed a train to pass his station unwarned. If so, that agent was co-operating to just the extent that an auction bridge dullard is who *unnecessarily* allows his partner to proceed with a bid to which no assistance can be given. Such a station agent is guilty of criminal negligence—and so is the player. Most people, however, are polite, and so this probably is the first time the numerous offender has been told, right out in public, what sort of creature he really is.

CRIME No. XII

"I guess if I'd opened your suit instead of my own we would have done better."

For the development of chronic cases of hindsight, auction bridge probably has no equal. Peculiarly, too, the correct play in many of the if-I'd-only-done-so-and-so situations is as obvious before the error is made as it is afterward. Confusing, mystifying departure from the conventional causes most of the trouble; in other words failure to do at a critical time that which under any other circumstances would be done as a matter of course.

It is all a good deal as it would be in the case of a housekeeper who, under the nervous strain of preparing for company, forgot to put baking powder in the biscuits. This is, or is not, a serious error according to circumstances; there are "beaten" biscuits, you know—and there also are auction bridge players who are beaten.

Perhaps a better illustration is afforded by the convention in cake baking of availing

oneself of sugar rather than salt, the result here to a surprising degree depending on which of these ingredients is used. In auction bridge, when a player, say, has bid a suit and then doubled an opponent's declaration, the doubler's partner is supposed to provide the sugar for the cake, if he has the lead, by opening the suit which the doubler has declared. The leader knows, or *should* know, in advance that he is being depended upon for such a lead. He is not expected to be unconventional; indeed, to be conventional is as essential as the blessing is on the night when the minister and his wife are being entertained for dinner.

And yet there are a surprisingly large number of players who will take a chance in critical situations of this sort by undertaking experimental development of suits or cards of their own. As a matter of fact, the enthusiast who willingly sacrifices possible tricks in his own hand solely for the purpose of making good the greater declared strength of his partner is a rare and lovable *superhuman* being.

The hobby of some very nice and genteel criminals is the singleton lead. They play it as the amateur musician in the next apartment does his cornet—at every opportunity. They play it without regard to harmony. They play it in the face of eloquent protests. It doesn't make the slightest difference to them whether they really have the strength to justify the lead; they know that once upon a time a cross ruff was set up against a declarer, and they persistently hope to be able to repeat the feat.

Given hands like the following, it is as certain as the maid's day out that these players, if they have the lead, will open with the eight of clubs, regardless of what the bidding has been:

Spades: Jack, eight, seven, deuce.

Hearts: Jack, nine.

Clubs: Eight.

Diamonds: Queen, nine, seven, four, trey, deuce.

This lead may be all right sometimes, but such a case is not like that developing the other night when the partner of the singleton

holder bid three hearts, was overcalled by three spades and doubled the spade declaration. The leader, of course, should have started with his highest heart, that being his partner's suit, but instead he led his eight of clubs, letting the declarer in with the king, (he also held the ace) and permitting trumps to be immediately cleared by finessing against the leader with the assistance of the nine and queen in dummy.

The player's offense here, as almost anyone ought to know, was not that he led a singleton when he had four trumps, but that he failed to do the thing which his partner, *in doubling*, expected him to do. The important fact was that spades had been doubled and that the doubler previously had declared his suit.

It happened in this case the cards were so placed that the leader's jack of hearts, led through the queen in dummy, would have insured three heart tricks to the doubler and his partner. Under other conditions, the singleton lead might have worked out satisfactorily, giving the leader a trick or two by

ruffing, and *in that event* the success of the undertaking, of course, would have been cited in justification of the departure from convention. The hen, you know, almost always cackles when she lays an egg.

Now, don't mistake this; it's not an argument for blind following of "rules." It should not be forgotten, however, that most bidding and playing in auction bridge is predicated upon certain *recognized* and *standardized* principles, and that deviation from convention under many circumstances results in material loss of points. It is no better policy in auction bridge than it is in business to deceive one's partner.

Most really good players profess dislike of being bound by mechanical formula, and, because of the reasonable manner in which they deviate from the usual procedure, they are justified in their opposition, but it will be noticed that such players, whether or not in *conscious* conformity to accepted conventions, always bid and play conventionally when they desire to convey definite informa-

tion or contribute definite aid to their partners.

This sort of playing is second nature with them and they, therefore, may not be willing to concede that it is in any sense "playing by rule," but they would be the first to resent in others the haphazard bidding and leading which is so common among devotees of the game. The conventions of auction bridge are its language and between partners there is nothing less conducive to success than failure to speak in a recognizable tongue. Greek is a perfectly practicable language where it can be understood, but it would not go far toward effecting the surrender of one's property in the hands of a Chinese-American laundryman.

The safe policy for our average auction bridge partner, regardless of how keenly he may suffer from the surrender, is to concede that the conventions of the game are based upon definite knowledge of procedure which will win in a majority of cases. They are reliable props which will be found as useful to him as are furniture and walls to his little

majesty, the baby, who is just undertaking to walk.

“I guess if I’d opened your suit instead of my own, we’d have done better,” often is a confession of the need of a nurse.

CRIME No. XIII

"I thought maybe you had led away from the queen and so I took a chance that my jack would be just as good, third hand, as my king."

Glorious thought! Excellent chance!

Set a buzz saw before some men and the desire to know more about it will cause them forever after to mourn a finger. Put a tempting, forbidden dish before a dyspeptic and the longing to taste it will shortly justify his bad opinion of his will power. Give the street beggar a dime and ere long he will be drinking to your confidence in human nature. Boast that the baby never cries and immediately you learn how loudly obstinacy can assert itself. Try a new dish for the first time on a night when you have company and before the evening is over the old receipt will have won your confidence. Bet an escaped lunatic a few dollars on the election and spend the rest of the year convincing yourself that you really knew better.

Give a man a motorcar and a copy of the speed laws and watch the race to determine which will be broken first. Tell an auction bridge player *never* to finesse against his partner and learn how highly good advice is regarded.

We know that inexperienced persons should not monkey with buzz saws, that dyspeptics ought to be careful of their diet, that street beggars should be directed to the police station, that babies are not dependable subjects for boasts, that lunatics know as much about elections as does any one else, that speed laws are sometimes enforced, and that finessing against one's partner is endangering both life and reputation, and yet — well, we continue human.

Arrests do not strengthen men's judgment. nor punishments prevent crime. Suffering is not a cure for the liquor habit and reverses do not allay the gambling fever. Men will be boys, and women often never outgrow short skirts; hence good judgment sometimes is overridden; hence finesses against partners persist.

In the quiet of a studious evening at the card table recently a competent player led the five of hearts in opening against a no-trump declaration. Dummy thereupon modestly laid down two small hearts. The dealer's partner, taking stock of his hand while the declarer paused to estimate his own resources, found that he held the king, jack and one small heart. The longer third hand thought about it the more convinced he was that he saw an opportunity to save his king for better things.

So he played his jack, and immediately was overplayed by the declarer's queen. Fourth hand, getting in thus easily and unexpectedly, ran through three suits before relinquishing the lead. He made a little slam on a bid of three—a little slam on a hand in which the opponents' heart suit alone, if properly played, would have set the contract one trick.

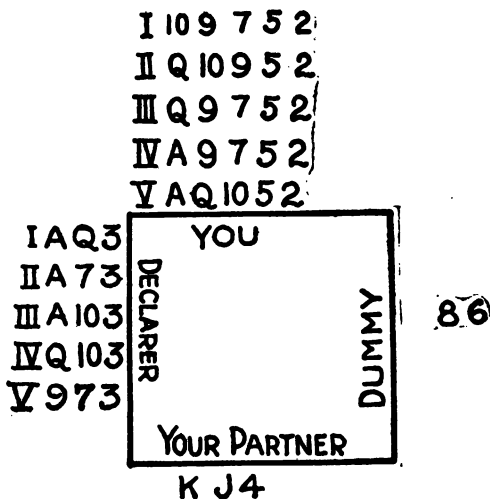
"I thought maybe you had led from the queen," the leader's partner explained, "and so I took a chance with my jack."

The chance was the difference between a little slam and a defeat for the declarer. Finessing against his partner caused The Criminal to lose 160 points—fifty that the declarer scored for the slam, sixty that he received for winning six-odd at no-trump and fifty that would have been made for the set. It also put The Criminal and his partner a game to the bad on the rubber. And the chance was one that a novice can see was not worth taking—in fact, *it wasn't even a chance*; it was certain abandonment of chance. There was no possibility of making an extra trick by playing the jack; on the contrary, the one chance of gaining was to play the king.

The *finesse against one's partner*, you see, is different from many other finesses. Some of the others are justifiable. There's the finesse, for instance, against death in jumping off a moving street car to go back for the spool of thread that your wife asked you to bring home; there's the finesse against hunger of spending one's last cent to send flowers to a girl on the night when a rival

is scheduled to call; there's the finesse against freedom and happiness in leading the way down a church aisle to the strains of a wedding march, and, too, there's the finesse against nature of saving money temporarily by neglecting that cavity in the left eye tooth. There's something to be gained if these finesses win, but the finesse against a partner at auction bridge gains only sighs.

The following diagram shows why:



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Illustration No. 5.

Here are five distributions of the cards of one suit. In every case your correct lead, of course, is the five. In every case your fickle partner holds the king, jack and four, and dummy holds the eight and six. In every case the lesson is the same. Look at the cards:

In I your partner gains nothing by not playing the king on the first lead. The declarer cannot be prevented from taking two tricks unless he himself leads the suit.

In II your partner gains nothing by not playing the king. The declarer's ace cannot be avoided, and what difference does it make whether it is forced with the jack or king?

In III your partner gains nothing by not playing the king. The ace must win a trick, and the sooner you know how the cards lie the better.

In IV your partner gains nothing by not playing the king. Indeed, if he does not play the king the declarer makes a trick he could not otherwise have won and blocks the suit as well. Played properly, you and your partner on this distribution, of course, should

make four or five tricks in the suit.

In V your partner gains nothing by not playing the king. Here is the desirable situation which he hopes will exist if he plays the jack; i. e., he trusts his partner holds the queen. Well, his partner does hold the queen; and what is gained by playing the jack? The declarer's opponents have all the tricks anyway, haven't they?

Summing up, we find that *in no case* is anything gained by playing the jack, but that in one case such playing permits a guarded queen unnecessarily to block the suit. It was such a case (IV above) that was cited earlier in showing a loss of game and 160 points.

So much for the simple, modest facts. They're self-evident, you say? And elemental? Granted! But still their presentation's justified, for we're finessing now against the chance that the perfectly intelligent but thoughtless former friend who lost that 160 points the other evening will not stop reading his complimentary copy of this book until he has come at least as far as this.

CRIME No. XIV

"If I'd only known you were out of that suit I'd have led it again so you could have trumped, but of course I didn't know it."

Did you ever have a maid who, after explicit instructions regarding the wearing of a white cap and apron when serving, came sailing into the dining room every time you had company, oblivious of the fact she was dressed in kitchen attire? Or did you ever have an office boy who never listened long enough to understand your instructions, and always took papers and memoranda to the wrong desk?

Then you understand the case of the auction bridge player whose offense is to be chronicled here, and are qualified to assist in passing sentence. You know the kind of player under consideration—every one does. His interest centers chiefly in those hands during the playing of which his partner is dummy. He doesn't care much about the de-

fensive game, being "rather boawd" if the run of cards is decidedly against him for more than two or three successive deals. Usually, he keeps a hogshhead of conversation on tap and interrupts its flow only when some one meaningly inquires whose turn to bid or play it is.

He gauges his game by *instinct*, whatever that may be, and is about as dependable as the weather. His thoughts always having gone off submarining, he imagines he knows a great deal about the deep points of the game, but the truth is he's so far submerged most of the time that the details—the petty annoyances, he'd probably call them—go well over his head. He could no more name the card his partner played to his last lead, or tell how many cards of a given suit were outstanding than he could recite the names of members of the President's Cabinet.

Like all similarly cursed persons, he forever is trying to rid himself of his temperamental eccentricities by inflicting them on his associates—and always succeeding without in the least diminishing his own supply. Tem-

perament, you know, is usually dangling a rattle in the face of attention.

Yet temperamental folks enjoy auction bridge, in spite of the fact that failure to notice what cards one's partner plays is temporarily just as serious a matter as failure to note the new draperies which one's life partner has hung either over the apartment windows or from her shoulders. Here, the sort of comment which the offense provokes depends on the partner. There are partners who would pass a plea like the one heading this Crime just as they would pass a Marlborough or a leper—and, perhaps, for the same reason.

But there are other partners who would be constrained to suggest, more or less bluntly, that if greater attention were paid to the game, and consequently less to envying Mrs. Quagmire's new pearl necklace, there would be fewer misplays made.

How often we hear a player remark:

"Well, there's only one of the suit for which I cannot account; I wonder if it's my partner who is short?"

And then, not getting the apparently anticipated response, he leads the suit. *If the partner has played properly* on the preceding leads, of course there ought not to be much question about how many cards of the suit he still holds, but players who habitually conjecture like this usually are too deaf to hear an echo and so they don't know what the situation really is.

Consider this combination:

The leader holds king, jack, nine, seven, four and deuce of spades. Believing in fourth best leads when forced to open suits of this sort, he plays the seven.

Dummy lays down the six, five and trey, playing low, and you, the leader's partner, play the eight. This eight, of course, is your highest card, and the leader, by glancing at his own hand and dummy, can account for all of the cards under the eight; therefore he knows that your highest card in the suit also is your lowest one—in other words, that you are playing a singleton.

That's simple, but somehow it seems impossible for many players to make the cal-

culatation. They would rather keep on leading and derive their information, though thus belated, from your failure to follow suit. This certainly is one accurate means of ascertaining where the cards lie, but it's an expensive one, and persons who practice it are not the kind of partners with whom one pleads to play. Persistent use of a bent pin on a chair is to be recommended for the development of the habit of observation in these cases.

Such oversights in computation, however, are not nearly as annoying as persistent disregarding of echoes.

If the leader, at trumps, plays the king of a suit and then the ace, and his partner puts the nine on the king trick, and the four on the ace trick, the leader ought not to require many guesses in deciding who holds the unplayed cards which he cannot see. Nor, at no-trump, if the leader plays the king and ace and his partner follows suit with two cards in descending value, ought there to be any doubt that he has at least two more of the suit.

The echo, indeed, often conveys more touching news than does the letter which the college boy writes home just before the first of the month. But what good is the letter if dad ignores it and what is the value of an echo if the partner doesn't see or understand it? Echoing to a *blind partner* is about the most futile thing in the world; it's as hopeless as calling for help into the funnel of a cyclone.

The Echo family is a peculiar tribe. Its members know nearly every one and nearly every one knows them. All of them are strictly conventional. All are *policemen*. All have *entree* to our best circles. And yet many persons do not seek, or even acknowledge, their acquaintance. Of course, they're a family of gossipers—that is conceded to be a human characteristic, is it not?—but they are worth cultivating for the highly valuable information they impart.

The regular assignment of these policemen is to the traffic squad, and one of their chief duties is to prevent blockades. This they do automatically, mechanically, in the

course of their regular work, performing for the declarer's opponents the service for which the declarer himself invokes the aid of that ancient, elemental rule:

"Play the high cards of your suit out of the hand which is shortest in them."

The progenitors of the family, the members best known to auction bridge genealogists, are *Down-and-Out Echo* (alias Third Round Call) and *Plain Suit Echo*. In the present generation is a lusty youth which has the high sounding but really descriptive given name of *Encouragement Discard*. This energetic officer has lately been creating all sorts of trouble for declarers by arresting their suits right and left on the slightest provocation. Indeed, it seems to have, in common with other members of the family, a natural antipathy for declarers, always aligning itself with the opposition. What its functions are—how to use it and its kin to the best possible advantage—are matters foreign to this discussion, but those who understand its peculiar disposition long have realized that any Echo is a faithful and loving

friend that will forgive anything except neglect.

And what do we say of those who forsake their friends?

CRIME No. XV

"I thought I would surely make game that time. I had a perfectly wonderful hand, but one suit was against me, and I simply couldn't stop it."

You have doubtless heard stories about dentists who have bored holes in sound teeth for the purpose of collecting pay for filling them. You have heard of surgeons who are said to have profited from conducting unnecessary explorations in the equatorial region of the human body. And we all know that no automobilious individual ever believed the garage people really found \$67.11 work of work to do on the vocal chords of his wheezing car. But it takes an auction bridge enthusiast to tell real stories of malpractice, extortion and highway robbery.

If you don't believe this assertion, it's because you have never been dummy in a progressive auction bridge game when you had a good chance for the best score and were

forced to sit politely still while your destructive partner hacked little chips off a sound, healthy game until he had reduced it to the mere shadow of its original, promising self. It is barely possible that there are more trying situations than this in polite society, but if there are, they consist exclusively in listening to the excuses which the offenders placidly make afterward. Certainly, no one will dispute the statement that the most unpleasant drawing room discord is the blunderer's whining attempt to justify himself.

Why it is that one always encounters a *bungling partner* when he really has a chance to win continues one of the mysteries of the game. Almost everything about auction bridge except this has been reduced to a science.

Yes, tables have been prepared even to show just how many chances there are in 100 that your opponents will ruff your leads on first, second and third rounds when you hold from one to seven cards of a suit; just what the average trick winning probabilities are with almost any sort of hand; what the

odds are that a certain player holds a certain card under certain circumstances after a certain number of rounds of a certain suit—all this, and much more, has been set forth in cold figures. But even the experts balk when it comes to accounting for the *element of luck* in partnerships. (Wait a minute, you pirate bridge enthusiasts! Wait a minute and you'll see why you chuckled too soon!)

About the only rule that seems to apply is that the incompetent partner can usually be counted on to bob up at a critical moment. It's much like the case of the crash in the kitchen that suggests an immediate interview with the maid. She can't imagine how it happened, of course, but she dropped three kitchen dishes and a Wedgewood plate that had been in your family for ninety-seven generations, and nothing broke—except “that old blue thing.”

No, it isn't down on life's a la carte how these events are ordered, or what they cost; they're thrown in, like the big hunks of stuff

they call bread at the hotels and lobster palaces. Moreover, there's no alternative about accepting them—they're the *inevitable externals* which Epictetus advised his disciples to disregard.

"And what does it signify to you," he asked, "by what way you descend to hades?"

The plate's broken, isn't it? And the bridge score's ruined?

This is all right, as philosophy, but need its acceptance preclude the wish that some one would write a volume for our amusement and comfort regarding the *lost opportunities* of auction bridge? And, this haply occurring, would a moral injunction lie against our presenting copies thereof to certain misguided persons who think they play a good game of cards? Need it, indeed, bar us from hoping that some day there will be an end of the sort of play which turned victory into forlorn hope in the following case:

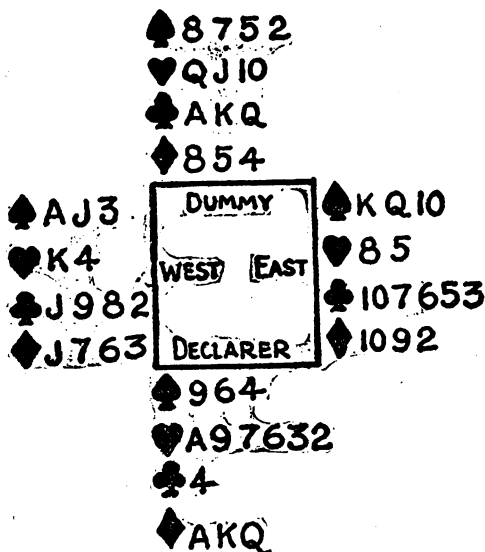


Illustration No. 6.

Hearts are trump, and on the deuce of clubs opening lead by West, it looks as if the declarer ought to make game—three tricks each in clubs and diamonds and five in hearts, or eleven, five odd, in all. But alas for miscalculations! Alas for partners who do not know that there “is a time to laugh and a time to play,” and that the time for laughing comes last.

The *impedimenta* in the declarer's hands which are worse than the encumbrances of the widow who wanted to remarry are those seven spades. These *honorless orphans* must be placed in an asylum in order that the balance of the hand may have the unrestricted privilege of developing itself to the utmost. If this is not done, the declarer will in the end hold controlling cards of a side suit in one hand and trumps in the other and so be forced unnecessarily to ruff perfectly good tricks.

But it's as easy to overlook this condition as it is to wed too hastily, and the opportunity here to fool with trumps offers just about the same temptation to some auction bridge players that a sweet, flirtatious but frivolous girl does to a real old or a real young man. So when the hand was played the other night it happened that after the declarer took the opening club trick in dummy, he at once led the queen of hearts, ducked in his own hand and lost to West's king.

West then tried spades, with the result that the declarer lost three tricks. Of course, what The Criminal should have done after winning the club trick was to have led clubs twice more and discarded two worthless spades from his own hand. Then he could have led to catch the trump king, knowing that if it went against him the king of trumps trick and one trick in spades would have been the extent of his loss. By making the attempt before getting the discards he loses game!

"I had a perfectly wonderful hand," he explains, "but one suit was against me and I couldn't stop it." And after that for what does one's philosophy count?

CRIME No. XVI

"I had forgotten all about the bidding, partner, or I wouldn't have opened that suit."

"I had forgotten—"

Today is some one's wedding anniversary, and somebody has forgotten. This afternoon some one had an appointment which he did not keep. Tonight some one finds an important letter in his pocket which should have been mailed last week. Yesterday it was discovered that several days ago some one forgot to order the electricity turned on in the new apartment. Tomorrow some one will forget the parcel he will have when he boards a trolley car. At the next auction bridge party you attend some one or more will forget what they are playing. Indeed, about the only things we do not forget are pay days and meal times, and of these the wolf and hunger are regular, not to say persistent, reminders.

"I had forgotten—"

Trains are wrecked, automobiles are stalled, guests are kept waiting, the keen edge of happiness is dulled, love is lost, inconveniences are inflicted, tempers are tamed, patience is proved, residences are robbed, armies are annihilated; yes, scores are sacrificed—all because some one had forgotten. And why not? If a man can forget his wife to death and not know it, what does a little thing like forgetting away an auction bridge game matter?

But let's avoid personalities. Auction bridge isn't a wife, married though some folks are to the game; it's a book—a book of thirteen chapters and a preface. The chapters are the tricks and the preface is the bidding.

Some persons read this book as they read a novel—a little of the introduction first, but not too much; then here and there in the first chapter; then long, irregular jumps for something to catch the attention, and finally a peek at the last page or two "to see how it comes out." They seek the skeletonized story, but

care little how it is told; they're like the man who thinks he is a lover of nature because he lives in a little country town.

Players of this sort find the preface of the game interesting only when they hold good hands, but they seldom, even then, connect the bidding with the rest of the game. It is glanced through and forgotten. And just as faddish folks who arrive late to hear "Il Pagliacci" miss one of the most beautiful parts and lose the atmosphere of the opera, so do these *fidgety* auction bridge players miss most of that which is worth while in the game.

Many of them play exactly as if they had arrived after the bidding had ended and they had been asked to take a hand in the game without knowing anything about what had happened previously, except who the declarer was and what was the trump. And a blindfolded child could scarcely outdo them in making a mess of things.

Failure to form the habit of drawing a definite inference from everything that happens at the card table is partly responsible

for players' inability to take advantage of favorable openings. *Auction bridge is the one institution in the world where there is no boss; every one must do his own thinking.* The bids, unlike the captain's signals in a football game, *indicate* where the attack *may* be directed rather than *command* where it *shall* be directed. The partner cannot say:

"I have five hearts headed by the ace, queen and jack, and also have the ace of spades and king of clubs; what had we better bid?"

But he is permitted to give information which is nearly as definite—provided, of course, that his partner is capable of properly interpreting his bidding. There must be inferences drawn—negative as well as positive, because what a partner *does not* hold often is as much of a factor in the bidding as what he has.

There must be team work. Anything short of this, in auction bridge or in married life, is likely to be disastrous, as Robert Louis Stevenson, in commenting on conditions

sometimes arising in the latter state, inferred in writing:

“When a horse has run away and the two flustered people in the gig have each possessed themselves of a rein, we know the end of that conveyance will be in the ditch.”

And ditches are plentiful around auction bridge tables.

Partners in this game are bound together like Siamese twins; they can't walk separately in different directions around the block to determine which is the shorter route. When a player expresses an opinion his partner is bound both to give consideration to it and to remember it. Thus:

The dealer bids one heart. West doubles. The dealer's partner, utilizing what many players consider the best defensive reply to the double from weakness, redoubles. East bids one no-trump, that declaration prevailing. The dealer, therefore, is the leader.

Olives are packed in a jar no tighter than a column could be with analyses of this situation. The bidding has told you and other competent observers almost as much about

the hands as a woman's bulky figure does regarding her sensitiveness about her weight.

The original bid, to begin, told something very definite about the dealer's hand. West's double specifically declared distributed strength in three suits, and, negatively, weakness in hearts. The redouble told exactly the same thing about the dealer's partner's hand. The bid of no-trump, following the double, loudly proclaimed: "I have hearts stopped!" but did not promise anything in the other suits.

This is a general outline of the situation, but only part of what the players know. For instance, the dealer's suit is hearts. He holds the king, queen, jack, nine and five. There are eight other hearts outstanding. Where are they?

Under average conditions there would be three each in two hands and two in the third hand. But West has denied heart strength and East has indicated stoppers. The latter, therefore, must have the ace and probably has the ten. He also may hold one or more smaller ones. The dealer's partner is obvi-

ously short in the suit, otherwise, instead of redoubling, he would have passed or supported the dealer's bid. Therefore, it is altogether likely that West and East hold most of the hearts which are not held by the dealer.

In the other suits, it is equally obvious, the strength is divided between West and the dealer's partner.

Well, now, under these circumstances, what should the dealer lead against no-trump?

An ordinary player—the kind of player who is your partner about two thousand one hundred and six times out of two thousand one hundred and seven—would lead the king of hearts, forgetting that the redouble has warned against this very thing, and that it is the other player who should lead hearts in order to go through the declared stoppers in East's hand.

Here is the way the cards were distributed:

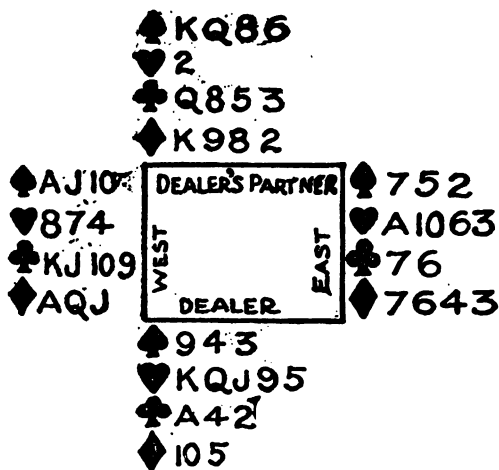


Illustration No. 7.

Almost anything is better than the heart opening. And if the dealer gets his partner in for one lead of the suit while the ace of clubs is retained as a re-entry, the hearts can only be stopped once, and the no-trumper can be defeated. This is the message of the redouble.

So it appears that the preface to the auction bridge book is as important as any of its chapters. But there still are many players who do not read it; or, reading, do not

understand; or, temporarily understanding, do not remember. And these are the ones who say:

“I had forgotten all about the king, partner, or I wouldn’t have led that suit.”

The cost of this, roughly speaking, is about fifty points a forget.

CRIME No. XVII

"It would have been better if I hadn't bid. I see that now, but I was panic-stricken when they doubled you."

There is a kind of disputant whose stock-in-trade argument sooner or later resolves itself into "betcha dollar." His belligerent put-up-or-shut-up ultimatum creates somewhat the same effect in the average polite assembly as is created in a crowded street by a horse that suddenly takes the bit into its teeth and starts determinedly for parts unknown. Both of these types of animals are characterized by stubbornness; they are results mothered by the spirit of the child, which, if it cannot have its own way, bursts into tearful threats to take its doll rags and go home. Their number is legion.

But the really remarkable thing, considering the known source of this kind of individual's inspiration, is the *ease* with which he dominates certain other people. He is as wind to dust, or as a hot day to butter. At auction bridge he manifests himself in

scores of ways, but scarcely more effectively than in his utilization of the double.

"Ha! ha!" he says, in a superior way, "got you up another trick, didn't I? Well, I guess I'll just have to double that!"

And if the double *does happen* to suit you, it alarms your partner, who rushes excitedly up with a *popgun* to rescue you from brigands!

The *when* of auction bridge is to many players its most mystifying and disturbing factor. When to double, when not to double; when to declare no-trump and when to declare a suit; when to lead away from a certain combination and when to wait for it to be led up to; when to finesse and when to eschew finessing; when to overcall one's partner and when to pass; when to lead a singleton and when not to invite an opportunity to ruff—these are but a few of the common problems which constantly are arising to puzzle one's partners and furnish the explanations for their preferences for rhum and euchre. Require the exercise of good judgment in any undertaking, whether it is

the making of a contract at auction bridge, the serving of a course dinner, or the solution of a business problem, and instantly its popularity begins to wane.

Most mistakes, of course, are results of lack of experience, or ignorance of established principles. Thus, Ignorance starches table linen, but Experience gets a better effect with water, a flatiron and persistence. Ignorance chastises the wayward child with whom Experience reasons. Ignorance's many clothes proclaim their cheapness; Experience's few, their quality. Ignorance's husband gets gelatine desserts, which Experience abandoned long ago for pie. Ignorance persists in trying to clear a suit for which she has no re-entry where Experience devotes her efforts to making good her partner's cards. Ignorance's excuse is *hard luck*; Experience's, *silence*.

The domineering bidder would not get far without Ignorance's aid. He doesn't domineer when he plays against Experience. *You*, for instance, know how to handle him. He never forces you into the serious error

of rushing from one suit to another to escape his double. You know whether a double is *really to be feared*, and, better, you know that those whose doubles are justified are prepared as well to double you in a new declaration as they were in the old. *It is a poor double*, indeed, you'll agree, *that won't work five ways*.

But your partner—well, that's different; he *doesn't know!* Elwell and Foster, Irwin and Montgomery, Shepard and Ehlermann have cautioned and illustrated and advised and profited in vain, so far as he is concerned. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," quoted the cook as she scooped the spilled beans from the floor and replaced them in the dish. Our bungling auction bridge player doesn't know the beans have been spilled—not even when he has done the spilling himself—and you, martyr to propriety, fear to tell him.

You imagine, of course, he will see from what happened that a mistake was made, but you forget there is a prerequisite to analysis. Moreover, there is a worse partner than the

one who doesn't know the game, he being the partner who *does know* the game, *and knows he knows it*, but doesn't know how to break the news *gently*. Perhaps you justifiably hesitate to instruct the one for fear of becoming the other; if so, be assured that popularity is the most you may expect to win at the auction bridge table.

Sometimes, though, even the disposition to maintain the social status quo is seriously taxed. One of these occasions is when the howling dogs next door, by the very persistence of their wail, set your sensitive nerves on edge. Another is when the pragmatic auction bridge player who is your partner, while you still are several thousand feet above safety, gives you a toy balloon for a parachute and kicks you off your volplaning airship.

"You may fall a little farther this way," is the consoling explanation, "but I think I have picked out a soft spot on which to land."

After you have separated yourself from the debris, you find it was not so much soft

earth as soft head that needed consideration.

The tumble, you realize, was indirectly caused by your partner's dizziness. He feels reasonably safe when flying along close to the ground, but in the upper atmosphere becomes panicky. He lacks the knowledge of the principles of aeronautics which is essential to correct, automatic action in an emergency. He takes you out of a double because he imagines in his moment of temporary excitement that the double was directed against a particular suit. When he himself is doubling he never thinks about how that double may be dodged and hence he does not realize that avenues of escape ordinarily are closed when competent players challenge the soundness of an opponent's bid. He plays up and down in an alley of routine and only rushes into new trouble when he attempts to slide out at either end. He fails to double when he should double, but he does double when to double is foolish or useless; hence, all he knows how to do when some one doubles him is to double in his own tracks.

The principle of the double is so simple it is hard to understand why it bothers so many partners. Doubles of low bids, doubles which are based exclusively on trump holdings, doubles on single suits, doubles which cannot be immediately switched to cover the four other possible declarations; doubles, in other words, which are not made on general strength—these, as good players know, and all players should know, are crimes of the game for which the penalty is likely to be severe. Conversely, then, the doubled bidder, or the partner of the doubled bidder, usually finds it more advantageous to back up promptly to the wall and fight matters out on the chosen spot than to chase wildly up and down the alley looking for a loose brick to throw.

“I was panic-stricken when they doubled you,” is a frank confession, but a poor defense. There was a time when courts of law were giving considerable attention to experts who told about “brain-storms” and other sorts of mental unrest, to save unfortunate

human beings from the electric chair, but these pleas are not so common now. The "brain storm" may be an accepted fact, but its victim is not likely to be overwhelmed with sympathy when he pleads his case before a card table jury.

CRIME No. XVIII

“Well, it’s too bad; I’m sorry, but it didn’t even occur to me that you might have a stopper in a suit as long as that one.”

Some families might occupy the apartment or flat over yours for years and you would never know they existed. Other families would not be there a week before you would know that they arise at 8 o’clock, dine in the kitchen, use the couch in the front room for a bed, seldom go out in the evening, quarrel automatically and take their baths serially on Saturday nights.

Some folks realize that they have neighbors and associates and some do not. The latter, according to a common theory, make themselves heard in the world; anyway, they keep their downstairs neighbors constantly looking up, which is by way of accomplishing something. And these people, usually, are nothing if not independent—in which respect they would not be numbered with the

minority in an average auction bridge gathering.

Ah! how well we know the type and recognize the symptoms! They always play their own little hands on their own "well-I-simply-had-to-do-it" principle and leave us sighing over lost points that they, benighted ones, never even suspect existed. They hold none of the hearts their opponents are bidding, and so they go to absurd lengths in another suit when you, inconsequential worm, sit opposite them, eager to double the hearts, but lacking the *opportunity!* They gauge the *combined* hands at cards by what they themselves hold, just as they judge creation and all mankind out of their limited, narrow, little personal experiences.

They play as separate units, not as partners, and their constant plea to indictments for their crimes is self-preservation. They evidence as much interest in *your* hand as your maid does in your financial condition when you tell her you are too poor to grant her request for \$1 a week increase in wages. Indeed, when one thinks it over, observance

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of the first law of nature seems to have become an occupation. Everybody's doing it, which probably accounts for the lawyers, ministers and undertakers being so busy. Self-preservation, nowadays, is about the only thing that can occupy four seats simultaneously at a card table. And what a time it must have talking back at itself! What self-sacrifice, what stoicism, what martyrdom there must be represented in one little "no bid!"

But, on the other hand—still keeping self-interest's multiple presence in mind—how about the *partner* of the player, who, like some horses, declines to work double? How about the victims of the chronic dyspeptics of the game? Does an incurable malady necessarily make a person socially interesting, even though he does talk about it all the time? Or does his painful inability to digest an opponent's diamond bid arouse sympathetic response in *your* half of the partnership when your own hand is *flashing* diamonds?

Let us discuss the case judicially: The Offender sits opposite you in a round during which the declarer has won four out of five tricks in the play of a no-trump declaration, the following being the situation at that stage of the game:

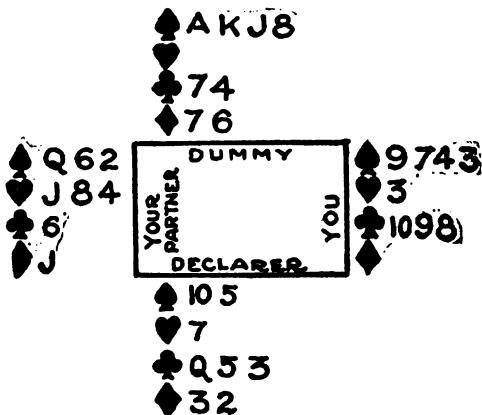


Illustration No. 8.

Obviously, your partner has the high diamond and controls the hearts. His club is worthless and dummy's holdings in the spade suit, which has not been led, place the second hand badly for the protection of his queen of spades. His chance of getting in to

make his hearts, if he has any, would seem to be through a fortunate diamond lead or as a result of his partner coming through with his remaining heart. At any rate, that's how the situation would appeal to you if you were playing your partner's hand, but unfortunately you are on the far side of the table and the etiquette of the game does not permit the use of the deaf and dumb alphabet. Your part, just now, is purely one of hard thinking—and you do it well!

The declarer, who has the lead, needs five more tricks to make his contract. Three of these — queen of clubs and ace and king of spades—are certain. The chance for two extra tricks is in the spade suit, so the ten is led for a finesse. Your partner hesitates and you recall the Biblical question: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" You can imagine the debate:

There are those high hearts and that two-karat diamond. It really seems a shame to throw a "guarded" queen onto the ten of spades. And, anyway, maybe the declarer has no more spades in his own hand. Per-

haps he will have to overtake his ten in order to make his ace and king.

“How long halt ye between two opinions?” Well, in the case of your partner the halting is at least long enough for the principle of self-preservation to prevail. Thus, for the millionth time that you’ve seen it wrongly done, the deuce is played.

The result, of course, is that Mr. Declarer takes four spade tricks and one trick in clubs—just what he needs to fulfil his contract. If your partner had covered the ten with his queen, your nine would have been made good, blocking the suit, and while that lonesome card might not have taken a trick, it at least would have saved one.

Your bill therefore should read:

MY PARTNER

to

ME, DR.

POINTS.

**To score made against us through your
failure to play queen----- 30**

To honors we would have scored by setting contract if queen had been played 50

Total ----- 80

Please remit.

But how can you expect an admission of debt from a partner who does not know what is the *one* chance to win when the ten is led through his queen and two small cards up to an ace, king, jack and one in dummy?

What can you say, and still observe the proprieties, of a player who, holding *three* cards of a suit in his own hand, seeing *four* more in dummy, and crediting the declarer with only *one*, fails to realize that his partner's holding is too long to be cleared?

The offender's plea is that this was an unusual, a freak, situation—the answer akin to that of the violator of the statutes who pleads ignorance thereof. What shall the verdict be? This: That the partner at some time during the evening shall become an opponent!

CRIME No. XIX

"It was such a dandy chance to make game that I just couldn't resist trying the finesse."

Nearly every situation in this world calls for the exercise of judgment. Even red tape is only a system for deferring the passing of judgment until the matter reaches some qualified person. Unfortunately, however, there's no red tape about auction bridge. The poor player who is combining the hands can't pass the decision along to some one else. He is free to make a bad situation worse or to make the worst of a favorable one, and there is none who may gainsay him while the damage is preventable.

In the ordinary affairs of life, conditions are not just like this. Society as a whole takes certain precautions for its own protection. The insane and the criminal are segregated; the autoist and the engineer are required to pass examinations; the physician, the dentist, the lawyer, even the plumber, can exact fees only if they are licensed. The

sale of food is regulated—more or less—and there are requirements to be met in the manufacture and dispensing of drugs. Daily life, indeed, is hedged by scores of limitations and restrictions, man imposed.

But at auction bridge these are lacking. One must play with the person the hostess elects, or the drawing of the tally cards, or the cutting of the deck, or the peril of progression prescribes. The player is as blameless as the baby who has been given a bottle of ink, or a shaker filled with pepper, for a plaything, and there is nothing to do, naturally, but make the most of it.

Thus it happens that we meet some strange play fellows. And not the least strange of these are the ones who cannot resist the temptation to finesse. The ones who finesse against their partners have previously been discussed; they are the chronic, the confirmed, the hopeless cases. But they are not alone in crime — no one ever is.

There is another kind—second in degree, perhaps—who forget to take the bidding into account in their attempts to make extra

tricks. They will finesse boldly at no-trump right into the hand of a player who has bid one or two or three in the finessed suit, and, losing, will mournfully comment:

"There you are again! Some folks seem to be able to make finesses work, but I don't think I ever won one in my life!"

You feel disposed to tell them they ought to have known better, and then you remember that there are more ways than one of wasting time.

Not all the cases are incurable, however. Occasionally you meet an habitual finesser who is such merely because he doesn't know any better. He has been led to believe that finessing is a method of making cards win extra tricks and that if the attempt fails he has obtained the most from the hand anyway. But of course this is not always true, and the error, when error is made, is purely one of judgment.

In this class belong the finesse toward the player whom it is desirable to keep out of the lead, the finesse which is taken in a plain suit at trumps before trumps are led, or,

often equally bad, the finesse in trumps which is taken before possible discards are made of losing cards in side suits, and the double finesse which risks a set on an otherwise assured contract in the hope of winning game. There is also a kind of player who persists in what may be called the *imitation finesse*—but more about that anon.

Those who regularly finesse when they should not, usually fall victim to the same lure—some form of the ace-queen combination. Peculiarly the minor tenaces do not seem to have proportionately nearly the same attraction. Most of our partners who finesse too frequently do not carry their extra trick-winning expeditions beyond endeavors to catch kings. With ace-queen-ten, even when held in one hand, they will play queen instead of ten, and they seldom will finesse the jack from the king-jack against the queen. Below that, they almost never go. End play, involving finesses of cards lower than the ten, following a round or two of the suit, are *unknown* to them.

The reason, of course, is inability, or lack of inclination, to follow the fall of the cards closely enough to know what small ones are outstanding after the first round or two. One cannot very well be expected to realize that he holds *fourchette over an eight* if he does not know whether the eight has been played or who probably holds it.

This inability to recognize the value of a hand, or what remains of it, often is expensive. For instance, it cost numerous Middle West farmers considerable fortunes a few years ago to learn that a large deposit of coal existed beneath their properties. When they did discover the fact the hand had been played and the discoverers—real estate men—had scored the profits. The farmers, however, could not reasonably have been expected to know about the coal—it wasn't in their line—whereas our auction bridge partner usually has no excuse for not knowing what cards are held against him.

Nevertheless, even the thoughtless, sleepy, indolent, careless, disinterested players who over-finesse, and finesse when they shouldn't,

and finesse badly when they have a choice of finesses, are petty offenders compared to the hapless victims of the insane idea that it is a finesse to lead a queen from queen and small cards up toward an ace and small cards. Where the notion ever originated that it was *good playing* to clear a weakly guarded suit for the opposition passes comprehension; however, there are persons who not only do this thing, but do it systematically, persistently, determinedly and unblushingly.

What possible benefit is to be derived from mutilating one's hand—deliberately amputating the digits, the honors—someone may sometime be able to explain, but until the explanation is made most of us will continue to classify the offense as immolation.

It seems as if the once popular pastime of leading royalty to the block has its modern parallel in the slaughter of honors at auction bridge. Naturally, no one needs a diagram to see that a two-headed suit, like a two-headed calf, requires careful nursing through infancy, and yet the way in which such a suit

is often played indicates that the following illustration is worth the space it occupies:

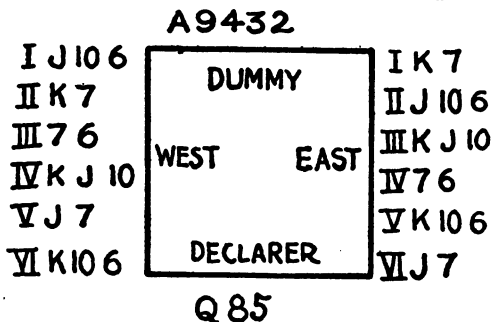


Illustration No. 9.

In every one of these cases, and they represent only a few of the possible combinations, a queen led, if covered by the king (even when the East hand holds that card and a low card is played on the first round from the ace hand), allows the opposition to take two tricks, the king and ten, or the king and jack, or the jack and ten winning. In other words, by this apparently still popular style of play, the ace and queen suit is made good for only three out of five tricks.

The player who takes the first trick with the *ace* and then leads low *toward* the queen,

playing *low* from the queen hand unless forced by the intermediate player, seldom loses anything and sometimes may make an extra trick. There is no reasonable prospect of any such fortunate result attending the lead of the queen toward the ace, but in spite of this one finds a partner almost every time he plays who will plunge headlong right through *the obvious* and dash his bridge brains out in the yawning chasm that awaits him. Unfortunately, too, players of this kind constantly are demonstrating the possibility of resurrection; they have infinitely more than the proverbial nine lives of the cat.

Such players don't like to take probable consequences into account in advance. They are like the business man who doesn't keep books, or the housekeeper who thoughtlessly imperils her standing with her gem of a maid by inviting company in without consulting the g. o. a. m.'s convenience. They all agree eventually that the policy doesn't pay, but they'd rather take a chance of having to swim the river than of exerting them-

selves to build a bridge that possibly may not be needed. No sort of example or experience seems *quite* sufficient to convince them of the merit of preparedness and conservation; they go sublimely on, making life and auction bridge profitable for someone else.

CRIME No. XX

"You see, I just can't bear to play a suit declaration when there's a chance to make it no-trump."

It was eight-thirty and Mirandy and her husband hadn't arrived. The card table was waiting, and so were the host and hostess; there was nothing else to do. It usually is this way when any one expects Mirandy; she likes to be expected.

"Well, I wouldn't care a whole lot if they didn't come," Some One suggested.

There was no response, but a significant glance started suddenly from a sober countenance on the other side of the room and darted quickly away. It was followed by a sigh.

Then silence.

Some One drummed nervously on the arm of a chair.

"Please don't do that," the Other One requested.

The drumming ceased.

More silence.

Another sigh; then more sighs. The Other One was thinking.

"Why don't you want them to come?" she asked, suddenly.

Some One also thought for a moment. Then he cleared his throat.

"I'll tell you why," he said, his voice having a somewhat defiant ring; "it's because Mirandy plays such a confoundedly poor game of *real* auction bridge!"

"Why, Billy Baxter! I'm ashamed of you!" expostulated Mrs. Baxter. "Mirandy is one-of-the-very-b-e-s-t-players in our Friday Afternoon Club! She wins about half the prizes!"

"And that's just where my complaint begins," hubby retorted. "Mirandy is a *progressive* bridge player—an *afternoon club* player—a *prize* player, if you will—but she doesn't know the first thing about the sort of game we're going to play here tonight. She's accustomed to sitting down at a table for *only four deals*, making what she can on each hand and then moving on to do the same thing over again. And that's

a very different game from *straight* auction bridge!"

"Different? What do you mean?" inquired the uncomprehending Mrs. Baxter.

"Different in every way! Your afternoon clubs don't play rubbers. The state of the score is usually immaterial—I mean the partnership score. The finer points of play, such as taking a set now to gain a chance later, or letting the other folks in on a minor suit bid which can't go game—points like this, and a dozen others I could name, are absolutely ignored. With you, it's simply a matter at each table of *making the most possible out of each of four opportunities*. You never let the opponents in with any sort of a bid if you can help it, because, even if they only make one odd, that's so much in their favor and so much that you have lost!

"Why, I'll warrant that your club friends bid no-trump twice as often as they do anything else, all in the hope of winning the 125 bonus points, or whatever it is you allow, for making game on *one* deal. Indeed, you've told me yourself that it has gotten so

it really isn't worth while bidding anything but no-trumps."

"Maybe I have," conceded Mrs. Baxter, "but what of it? Since when has it become an offense to bid no-trump?"

"An offense?" exclaimed her husband. "An offense, did you say? Why, it's one of the worst and most common offenses in the calendar! It's a crime!"

"The trouble with you," suggested Mrs. Baxter, "is that when you get started on an argument you always make yourself ridiculous. You're rapidly arriving, now."

"I don't ask you to take my word for it," persisted Mr. Baxter; "look it up in any authority you choose, or inquire of any one who plays rubbers. You'll find mighty quickly that no-trump bids, except for *informative* purposes, have steadily been losing favor for a long time. People have gotten over the idea that a four-ring circus is the only sort of entertainment worth while."

Mrs. Baxter rose and walked over to the window. "I suppose you know what four-ringed circuses have to do with playing

auction bridge," she said in a voice so calm as to be painfully promising, "but I'll confess your superior intellect has *me* at a disadvantage. However, I do know"—and she half-turned to face her husband—"I do know that Mirandy plays a good game of auction bridge!"

"And I know that she does not!" retorted the belligerent husband. "Moreover, I'll prove it to you before this evening is ended!"

"Billy Baxter, if you start any argu——"

The symptoms, as even a quack diagnostician of human nature might have recognized, were indicative of a severe case of marital eruption, but the ringing of the doorbell cut short Mrs. Baxter's threat and postponed the crisis.

A few minutes later Mirandy and her husband having been properly welcomed with kisses on the one side and cordial handshakes on the other, were seated at the card table with the Baxters, and the business of the evening was under way. Mirandy, it is probably needless to explain, sat opposite Billy—to which situation those who knew

Billy and Mirandy best would promptly have attributed the pall that soon was hanging in festoons above their lowered heads. Both secretly dreaded this ordeal, and Billy, in addition, was looking forward, with expectation that shamed realization, to the inevitable boudoir scene when Some One's explanations would be brushed aside as insufficient and the Other One would angrily declare:

"Well, sir, that's *pos-i-tive-ly* the last time I'll ever invite Mirandy to my house when you're at home! So there!"

Long before the guests departed Billy's cup of triumph was filled to overflowing, but for policy's sake he turned total abstainer. Mirandy was unusually venturesome and the cards, which ordinarily seemed strongly partial to her, early developed noticeable evidences of intention to distribute their favors. It was an evening of puzzling, tantalizing, provoking hands in which the suits were divided with absurd disregard of probabilities. Finesses went wrong, seemingly sound trump declarations turned out disastrously, and suits were as hard to clear at

no-trump as the debris is after the plaster has tumbled in a great chunk from the ceiling and scattered itself through piano, music cabinet, furniture and rugs.

Mirandy began with her usual dash and slap-bang determination. She played for game on every deal. She bid steadily to shut out all opposition, even that of her conservative partner. She strained minor suits to the breaking point in competition with major suits, and when Billy took her out of a no-trump bid with a call of spades or hearts she promptly returned to no-trump. Big scores—smashing, overwhelming scores—were what she sought. What she accomplished—in part at least—was to keep her husband, the scorer, busy figuring up penalties and so to delay the point making that only one rubber was played in the entire evening!

Of course this did not make matters especially interesting for any one. It was annoying to Mirandy's opponents, exasperating to Mirandy's partner and humiliating to Mirandy. She never enjoyed anything unless she was winning, and she could not

understand why her system of play was so suddenly unsuccessful. However, there was some consolation in the reflection that she never could win anyway when she played with Billy Baxter; he didn't seem to understand her game.

"Why, only a hand or two ago," she mentally commented, "he failed to go to no-trump after I bid spades, and when he laid down his hand he had the other three suits stopped!"

She couldn't comprehend this sort of bidding. She had been tempted to ask him at the time what he required for a no-trump declaration, but fortunately had restrained herself. He doubtless was one of those hopelessly conservative players. Well, anyway—she almost smiled at the thought—she'd have some satisfaction telling Jennie Cadwalder about it tomorrow! Jennie, as every one knew and most persons had felt, believed in the policy of thinking both unrestrainedly and out loud.

But neither Mirandy's brooding nor Billy's fuming aided them in point scoring.

Their team work was as successful as if one of them—take your choice, gentlemen—had been a spirited thoroughbred, insistent on running away, and the other—it's your turn now, ladies—a stubborn, balky, cantankerous army mule. They got along like a mismatched couple trying to rearrange the living room furniture. Their co-operation was like that of the Zulus with early missionaries. They bid against one another with all the heartiness of opponents and found it impossible to agree on anything, even as to whether Billy ought to close the window on the other side of the room. But they would have agreed, had the opportunity for any sort of agreement arisen, that they both were sorry Mirandy had come.

And yet it wasn't Mirandy's fault, nor was it Billy's. Each played one style of game, and played it well; the trouble came of trying to mix incompatibilities. *The playing of rubbers is, as Billy Baxter told his wife, a game apart from the playing of a series of unrelated deals.* Most of the players in Billy's circle bid no-trump with about the

same object in view that they have when they declare a club or a diamond; they really hope their partner will be able to take them out.

They prefer major suit declarations because these are capable of being appraised with fair accuracy in advance—because they are reasonably safe and pay a fairly good rate of interest. They concede a higher interest rate to no-trump, but charge against it an element of risk which is proportionately greater than the major suit investment. The situation, from their standpoint, is, in most instances, like making a choice between driving a lively horse and driving *four* lively horses tandem; the latter is great sport if one is an expert driver and the horses are well trained, but one obstinate animal can easily cause disaster. Hence Billy shies at no-trump, but Mirandy, who plays a very different sort of game, persists in saying, and probably always will persist in saying:

“You see, partner, I just can’t bear to play a suit declaration when there’s a chance to make it no-trump.”

A P P E N D I X .

Containing

**READY REFERENCE SCORE TABLE.
INDEX OF AUCTION BRIDGE LAWS.
THE LAWS OF AUCTION BRIDGE.
INDEX OF SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.**

READY REFERENCE SCORE

	Where Scored	Clubs	Diamonds	Hearts	Spades	No-Trump
For each trick taken in excess of six	B	*6	*7	*8	*9	*10
If doubled	B	*12	*14	*16	*18	*20
If redoubled	B	*24	*28	*32	*36	*40
†Three honors held between partners	A	12	14	16	18	20
†Four honors held between partners	A	24	28	32	36	40
†Five honors held between partners	A	30	35	40	45	—
†Four honors held in one hand	A	48	56	64	72	100
†Four honors held in one hand, fifth in partner's hand	A	54	63	72	81	—
†Five honors held in one hand	A	60	70	80	90	—
Slam (taking 13 tricks)	A	100	100	100	100	100
Little Slam (taking 12 tricks)	A	50	50	50	50	50
When contract is defeated, opponents score for each trick dealer is short	A	50	50	50	50	50
If doubled	A	100	100	100	100	100
If redoubled	A	200	200	200	200	200
Declarer's bonus for fulfilling doubled contract	A	50	50	50	50	50
For each extra trick	A	50	50	50	50	50
Declarer's bonus for fulfilling re-doubled contract	A	100	100	100	100	100
For each extra trick	A	100	100	100	100	100
For winning the rubber (two out of three games), 250 points in honors.						

A—Above the line, viz., honor score.

B—Below the line, viz., point score.

* When made by the declarer and on condition of his having fulfilled his contract; if declarer fails to make what he bids, he is set and his opponents score for each trick he is short, as shown later in table.

† The suit honors (clubs, diamonds, hearts and spades) are the ace, king, queen, jack and ten of trumps; at no-trump the only honors are the aces. Honors are credited to original holders, not to those who capture them.

Scores of opposing sides are kept in long parallel columns, across which a horizontal line is drawn. Trick points are scored below the line; honor points, above. Thirty trick points constitute game.

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The
LAWS OF AUCTION
and the
ETIQUETTE OF THE GAME

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THE LAWS OF AUCTION*

THE RUBBER

1. A rubber continues until one side wins *it by winning* two games. When the first two games decide the rubber, a third is not played.

SCORING

2. Each side has a trick score and a score for all other counts, generally known as the honor score. In the trick score the only entries made are points for tricks won (see Law 3), which count both toward the game and in the total of the rubber.

All other points, including *those scored for* honors, penalties, slam, little slam, and undertricks, are recorded in the honor score, which counts only in the total of the rubber.

3. When the declarer wins the number of tricks bid or more, each above six† counts on the trick score: six points when clubs are

* For the convenience of those acquainted with the 1916 Laws of Auction authorized by The Whist Club, *italics* have been used in the text of the revision here printed to indicate changes in phraseology and order and to show additions to the previous publication. — J. A. G.

†Such tricks are generally called "odd tricks."

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trumps, seven when diamonds are trumps, eight when hearts are trumps, nine when spades are trumps, and ten when the declaration is no trump.

4. A game consists of thirty points made by tricks alone. Every deal is played out, whether or not during it the game be concluded, and any points made (even if in excess of thirty) are counted.

5. The ace, king, queen, knave, and ten of trump suit are the honors; when no trump is declared, the aces are the honors.

6. Honors are credited to the original holders; they are valued as follows:

WHEN A TRUMP IS DECLARED							
3*	honors	held	between	partners	equal	value	of 3 tricks.
4	"	"	"	"	"	"	4 "
5	"	"	"	"	"	"	5 "
4	"	in 1 hand			"	"	8 "
4	"	"	1	"	{ 5th in partner's hand }	"	9 "
5	"	"	1	"		"	10 "

WHEN NO TRUMP IS DECLARED							
3	aces	held	between	partners	count	30	
4	"	"	"	"	"	40	
4	"	"	"	in one hand	"	100	

* Frequently called "simple honors."

7. Slam is made when partners take thirteen tricks.* It counts 100 points in the honor score.

8. Little slam is made when partners take twelve tricks.† It counts 50 points in the honor score.

9. The value of honors, slam, or little slam, is not affected by doubling or redoubling.

10. At the end of a rubber *the winners score 250 points additional.*

The trick, honor and bonus scores of each side are then added and the size of the rubber is the difference between the respective totals.

The losers of the rubber are entitled to the difference when they have the larger total.

11. When a rubber is started with the agreement that the play shall terminate (*i. e.*, no new deal shall commence) at a speci-

* Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a slam not otherwise obtained.

† Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring little slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a little slam not otherwise obtained. When a declarer bids 7 and takes twelve tricks he counts 50 for little slam, although his declaration fails.

fied time, and the rubber is unfinished at that hour, the score is made up as it stands, 125 being added to the score of the winners of a game. A deal if started must be *played out*.

11a. If a rubber be started without any agreement as to its termination and before its conclusion one player leaves without appointing an acceptable substitute (see Law 26), his adversaries have the right to elect whether the score be cancelled or counted as if covered by Law 11.

12. A proved error in the honor score may be corrected at any time before the score of the rubber has been made up and agreed upon.

13. A proved error in the trick score may be corrected at any time before a declaration has been made in the following game, or, if it occur in the final game of the rubber, before the score has been made up and agreed upon.

CUTTING

14. In cutting, the ace is the lowest, *the king the highest* card; between cards of

otherwise equal value the spade is the lowest, the heart next, the diamond next, and the club the highest.

15. Every player must cut from the same pack.

16. Should a player expose more than one card, the highest is his cut, *except as provided for in Law 19.*

FORMING TABLES

17. Those first in the room have the prior right to play. Candidates of equal standing decide their order by cutting; those who cut lowest play first.

18. Six players constitute a complete table.

19. After the table has been formed, the players cut to decide upon partners, the two lower play against the two higher. *In cutting for partners, should a player expose more than one card he must cut again.* The lowest is the dealer, who has choice of cards and seats, and, having made his selection, must abide by it.*

* He may consult his partner before making his decision.

20. The right to succeed players as they retire is acquired by announcing the desire to do so, and such announcements, in the order made, entitle candidates to *places as vacancies occur*.

CUTTING OUT

21. If, at the end of a rubber, admission be claimed by one or two candidates, the player or players who have played the greatest number of consecutive rubbers withdraw; *when more players than there are candidates have played the same number, the out-goers are decided by cutting*; the highest are out.*

RIGHT OF ENTRY

22. At the *beginning* of a rubber a candidate is not entitled to enter a table unless he declare his intention before any player cut, either for partners, for a new rubber, or for cutting out.

23. In the formation of new tables candidates who have not played at an existing

* See Law 14 as to value of cards in cutting.

table have the prior right of entry. Others determine their right to admission by cutting.

24. When one or more players belonging to an existing table aid in making up a new one, which cannot be formed without him or them, he or they shall be the last to cut out.

25. A player belonging to one table who enters another, or announces a desire to do so, forfeits his rights at his original table, unless the new table cannot be formed without him, in which case he may retain his position at his original table by announcing his intention to return as soon as his place at the new table can be filled.

26. Should a player leave a table during the progress of a rubber, he may, with the consent of the three others, appoint a substitute to play during his absence; but such appointment becomes void upon the conclusion of the rubber, and does not in any way affect the rights of the substitute.

27. If a player break up a table, the others have a prior right of entry elsewhere.

SHUFFLING

28. The pack must not be shuffled below the table nor so the face of any card be seen.

29. *The dealer's partner must collect and shuffle the cards from the preceding deal. He must then place them face downward to the left of the next dealer, where they must remain untouched until the end of the current deal.*

30. *At the conclusion of the deal the next dealer has the right to shuffle his pack, but should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling or while the pack is being cut, he must reshuffle.**

THE DEAL

31. Players deal in turn; the order of dealing is to the left.

32. Immediately before the deal, the player on the dealer's right cuts, so that each packet contains at least four cards. *When in or after cutting, and prior to the beginning of the deal, a card is exposed, or when*

** The dealer has the right to shuffle last except in the case covered by Law 34.*

any doubt *exists* as to the place of the cut, the dealer must reshuffle and the same player must cut again.

33. After the pack has been properly cut, it should not be reshuffled or recut except as provided in Law 32.

34. Should the dealer shuffle after the cut, his adversaries may *subsequently* shuffle and the pack must be cut again.

35. The fifty-two cards must be dealt face downward. The deal is completed when the last card is dealt.

36. In the event of a misdeal, the same pack must be dealt again by the same player.

A NEW DEAL

37. There *must* be a new deal:

- (a) If the cards be not dealt, beginning at the dealer's left, into four packets, one at a time and in regular rotation.
- (b) If, during a deal, or during the play, the pack be proved incorrect.*
- (c) If, during a deal, any card be faced in the pack or exposed, on, above, or below the table.

* A correct pack contains fifty-two cards divided into four suits of thirteen cards each, each suit containing one card of each denomination.

- (d) If more than thirteen cards be dealt to any player.*
- (e) If the last card do not come in its regular order to the dealer.
- (f) If the dealer omit having the pack cut, deal out of turn or with the adversaries' cards, and either adversary call attention to the fact before the end of the deal and before looking at any of his cards.
- (g) *If, before, during, or at the conclusion of the play one player hold more than the proper number of cards and another less.*

38. Should a correction of any offense mentioned in 37 *f* not be made in time, or should an adversary who has looked at any of his cards be the first to call attention to the error, the deal stands, and the game proceeds as if the deal had been correct, the player to the left dealing next. When the deal has been with the wrong cards, the next dealer *when it is his turn to deal* may take whichever pack he prefers.

39. If, prior to the cut for the following deal, a pack be proved incorrect, the deal is void, but all prior scores stand.

* This error, whenever discovered, renders a new deal necessary.

The pack is not incorrect when a missing card or cards are found in the other pack, among the quitted tricks, below the table, or in any other place which makes it possible that such card or cards were part of the pack during the deal.

40. Should three players have their proper number of cards, the fourth, less, the missing card or cards, if found, belong to him, and he, unless dummy, is answerable for any established revoke or revokes he may have made just as if the missing card or cards had been continuously in his hand. When a card is missing, any player may search the other pack, the quitted tricks, or elsewhere for it.*

41. A player may not cut, shuffle, or deal for his partner if either adversary object.

41a. A player may not lift from the table and look at any of his cards until the end of the deal. The penalty for the violation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honor score for each card so examined.

* The fact that a deal is concluded without any claim of irregularity shall be deemed as conclusive that such card was part of the pack during the deal.

THE DECLARATION

42. The dealer, having examined his hand, must either pass or declare to win at least one odd trick,* either with a specified suit *as trump* or at no trump.

43. The dealer having declared or passed, each player in turn, beginning on the dealer's left, must pass, make a higher declaration, double the last declaration made by an opponent, or redouble an opponent's double, subject to the provisions of Law 56.

44. When all four players pass their first opportunity to declare, the deal passes to the next player.

45. The order in value of declarations from the lowest up is clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, no trump.

To *overbid* a declaration, a player must bid, either

(a) An equal number of tricks of a more valuable declaration or

(b) A greater number of tricks.

E. g., 3 spades over 3 diamonds; 5 clubs over 4 hearts; 4 diamonds over 3 no trump.

* One trick more than six.

46. A player in his turn may overbid the previous adverse declaration any number of times, and may also overbid his partner, but he cannot overbid his own declaration which has been passed by the three others.*

47. The player who makes the final declaration† must play the combined hands, his partner becoming dummy, unless the suit or no trump finally declared was bid by the partner before it was called by the final declarer, in which case the partner, no matter what bids have intervened, must play the combined hands.

48. When the player of the two hands (hereinafter termed "the declarer") wins at least as many tricks as he declared, he scores the full value of the tricks won (see Law 3).‡

48a. When the declarer fails to win as many tricks as he declares, neither he nor his adversaries score anything toward the game,

* Seven is the maximum declaration, and if it be made, the only bid thereafter permitted (except a double) is seven of a higher valued declaration.

† A declaration becomes final when it has been passed by three players.

‡ For amount scored by declarer, if doubled, see Laws 55 and 58.

but his adversaries score in their honor column 50 points for each undertrick (*i. e.*, each trick short of the number declared.) If the declaration be doubled, the adversaries score 100 points; if redoubled, 200 points for each undertrick.

49. If a player make a declaration (other than a double* or a pass†) out of turn either adversary may cancel or accept it.

When a declaration out of turn is cancelled the player whose turn it was to declare bids, and the partner of the offending player may not thereafter participate in the declaration.

When a declaration out of turn is accepted it becomes the turn of the player to the left of the offender to declare and the partner of the offending player retains the right to participate in the declaration.

After a declaration out of turn, should the adversary to the left of the offender either pass, double, or declare before the improper bid is accepted or cancelled, such

* See Law 49a.

† See Law 49b.

act accepts the bid and thereby makes it the turn of said adversary.

Should the adversary to the right of a player who has bid out of turn be the proper declarer, and should he pass, double, or declare before the improper bid be accepted or cancelled, such act is a cancellation of the improper declaration.

When a bid out of turn is cancelled, it having been the turn of the partner of the offending player to declare, such turn passes to the adversary on the left of said partner.

49a. If a player double, or redouble when it is his partner's turn to declare, either adversary may

- (a) Accept the double or redouble as if it had been made in turn.*
- (b) Demand a new deal.*
- (c) Call the bid that was doubled or redoubled final, and elect whether the double or redouble stand.*

*There is no penalty for a double or redouble out of turn when the partner or the offender has already passed the declaration.**

* See Law 50b.

When a declaration is made final neither a redouble nor any other declaration may be made.

49b. A pass out of turn cannot be penalized and does not affect the order of bidding. The bidding is continued by the player whose turn it was when the pass out of turn was made.

The player who has passed out of turn may only re-enter the bidding in case the declaration he has passed be overbid or doubled.

Should the adversary to the left of a player who passes out of turn be misled thereby and either pass or declare, such act accepts the pass as being in turn.

50. If a player make an insufficient declaration, either adversary may demand that it be made sufficient in the declaration named, in which case the partner of the declarer may not further declare unless an adversary subsequently bid or double.

50a. If a player who has been debarred from bidding under Laws 49, 50, 52, or 66, during the period of such prohibition, make any declaration (other than passing), either

adversary may decide whether such declaration stand, and neither the offending player nor his partner may further participate in the bidding even if the adversaries double or declare.

50b. A penalty for a declaration out of turn (see Law 49), an insufficient declaration (see Law 50), or a bid when prohibited (see Law 50a) may not be enforced if either adversary pass, double, or declare before the penalty be demanded.*

50c. Laws which give to either adversary the right to enforce a penalty, do not permit consultation. Either adversary may call attention to the offence and select *or forego* a penalty, *or may pass the privilege to his partner. If consultation take place the right to demand a penalty is forfeited.*† The first decision made by either adversary is final and cannot be altered.‡

* When the penalty for an insufficient declaration is not demanded, the bid over which it was made may be repeated unless some higher bid has intervened.

† The question, "Partner, will you select the penalty, or shall I?" is a form of consultation and is not permitted.

‡ When a player directs his partner to select the penalty and the partner fails to do so or attempts to refer the privilege back, the right is forfeited.

51. At any time during the declaration, a question asked by a player concerning any previous bid must be answered, but, after the final declaration has been accepted, if an adversary of the declarer inform his partner regarding any previous declaration, the declarer may call a lead from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead. If the dummy give such information to the declarer, either adversary of the declarer may call a lead when it is the next turn of the declarer to lead from either hand. A player, however, at any time may ask what declaration is being played and the question must be answered.

52. *If before or during the declaration a player give any information concerning his hand other than that conveyed by a legitimate declaration, his partner may not thereafter participate in the bidding.*

53. *A double once made may not be altered.*

No declaration may be altered after the next player acts.*

* Such an alteration may be penalized as a bid out of turn.
(See Law 49.)

Before action by the next player a no trump or suit declaration may be changed:

- (a) To correct the amount of an insufficient bid.
- (b) To correct the denomination but not the size of a bid in which, due to a *lapsus linguae*, a suit or no trump has been called which the declarer did not intend to name.

No other alteration may be made.

54. After the final declaration has been accepted, the play begins; the player on the left of the declarer leads.

DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING

55. Doubling and redoubling doubles and quadruples the value of each trick over six, but it does not alter the value of a declaration; *e. g.*, a declaration of "three clubs" is higher than "two spades" doubled or redoubled.

56. Any declaration may be doubled and redoubled once, but not more; a player may not double his partner's declaration, nor redouble his partner's double, but he may redouble a declaration of his partner which has been doubled by an adversary.

The penalty for redoubling more than once is 100 points in the adverse honor score

or a new deal; for doubling a partner's declaration, or redoubling a partner's double it is 50 points in the adverse honor score. Either adversary may demand any penalty enforceable under this law.

57. Doubling or redoubling reopens the bidding. When a declaration has been doubled or redoubled, any one of the three succeeding players, including the player whose declaration has been doubled, may, in his proper turn, make a further declaration of higher value.

58. When a player whose declaration has been doubled wins the declared number of tricks, he scores a bonus of 50 points in his honor score, and a further 50 points for each additional trick. When he or his partner has redoubled, he scores 100 points for making the contract and an additional 100 for each extra trick.

DUMMY*

59. As soon as the player on the left of the declarer leads, the declarer's partner

* For additional laws affecting dummy, see 51 and 98.

places his cards face upward on the table, and the declarer plays the cards from that hand.

60. The partner of the declarer has all the rights of a player (including the right to call attention to a lead from the wrong hand), until his cards are placed face upward on the table.* He then becomes the dummy, and takes no part whatever in the play, except that he has the right:

- (a) To call the declarer's attention to the fact that too many or too few cards have been played to a trick;
- (b) to correct an improper claim of either adversary;
- (c) to call attention to a trick erroneously taken by either side.
- (d) to participate in the discussion of any disputed question of fact after it has arisen between the declarer and either adversary;
- (e) to correct an erroneous score;
- (f) to consult with and advise the declarer as to which penalty to exact for a revoke;
- (g) to ask the declarer whether he have any of a suit he has renounced.

The dummy, if he have not intentionally looked at any card in the hand of a player, has also the following additional rights:

*The penalty is determined by the declarer (See Law 67.)

- (h) To call the attention of the declarer to an established adverse revoke;
- (i) to call the attention of the declarer to a card exposed by an adversary or to an adverse lead out of turn;
- (j) *to call the attention of the declarer to any right which he may have under any law;*
- (k) *to direct the declarer who would concede a trick or tricks to the adversaries to play out the hand.**

61. Should the dummy call attention to any other incident in the play in consequence of which any penalty might have been exacted, the declarer may not exact such penalty. Should the dummy avail himself of rights (h), (i), (j), or (k), after intentionally looking at a card in the hand of a player, the declarer may not *benefit thereby*.

62. If the dummy, by touching a card or otherwise suggest the play of one of his cards, either adversary may require the declarer to play or not to play such card.

62a. If the dummy call to the attention of the declarer that he is about to lead from the wrong hand, either adversary may require that the lead be made from that hand.

* See Law 95.

63. Dummy is not subject to the revoke penalty; if he revoke and the error be not discovered until the trick be turned and quitted, whether by the rightful winners or not, the revoke may not be corrected.

64. A card from the declarer's hand is not played until actually quitted, but should he name or touch a card in the dummy, such card is played unless he say, "I arrange," or words to that effect. If he simultaneously touch two or more such cards, he may elect which to play.

EXPOSED CARDS

65. The following are exposed cards:

- (1) Two or more cards played simultaneously;
- (2) a card dropped face upward on the table, even though snatched up so quickly that it cannot be named;
- (3) a card so held by a player that his partner sees any portion of its face;
- (4) a card mentioned by either adversary as being held in his or his partner's hand.

A card dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table *and not seen by the*

partner,* or so held that it is seen by an adversary but not by the partner, is not an exposed card.

CARDS EXPOSED BEFORE PLAY

66. After the deal and before the declaration has been finally determined, if any player lead or expose a card, his partner may not thereafter bid or double during that declaration,† and the card, if it belongs to an adversary of the eventual declarer, *becomes an exposed card*.‡ When the partner of the offending player is the original leader, the declarer may also prohibit the initial lead of the suit of the exposed card.

67. After the final declaration has been accepted and before the lead, if the partner of the proper leader expose or lead a card, the declarer may treat it as exposed or may call a suit from the proper leader. A card exposed by the leader, after the final declaration and before the lead, is subject to call.§

* If seen by the partner it is an exposed card.

† See Law 50a. ‡ See Law 68. § See Law 68.

CARDS EXPOSED DURING PLAY

68. *An exposed card must be left face upward on the table.*

Until it is played the declarer has the right to call it at any time when it is the turn of its owner to play or lead, but the owner may play or lead it whenever he has the opportunity.

69. A player cannot be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

70. *Should an exposed card be called and the player be unable to obey the call because he is obliged to follow suit, the card is still exposed and the call may be repeated any number of times until the card is played.*

71. Two or more cards played simultaneously by either of the declarer's adversaries give the declarer the right to call any one of such cards to the current trick and to treat the other card or cards as exposed.

72. Should an adversary of the declarer expose his last card before his partner play to the twelfth trick, the two cards in his partner's hand become exposed, must be laid

face upward on the table, and are subject to call.

73. If, without waiting for his partner to play, either of the declarer's adversaries play or lead a winning card, as against the declarer and dummy and continue (without waiting for his partner to play) to lead several such cards, the declarer may demand that the partner of the player in fault win, if he can, the first or any other of these tricks. The other cards thus improperly played are exposed.

74. If either or both of the declarer's adversaries throw his or their cards face upward on the table, such cards are exposed and liable to be called; but if either adversary retain his hand, he cannot be forced to abandon it. Cards exposed by the declarer are not liable to be called. If the declarer say, "I have the rest," or any words indicating the remaining tricks or any number thereof are his, he may be required to place his cards face upward on the table. He is not then allowed to call any cards his adversaries may have exposed, nor to take any

finesse, not previously proven a winner, unless he announce it when making his claim.

75. If a player who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called (Laws 80, 86, and 92) fail to play as directed, or if, when called on to lead one suit, he lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of the suit demanded (Laws 66, 76, and 93), or if, when called upon to win or lose a trick, he fail to do so when he can (Laws 73, 80, and 92), or if, when called upon not to play a suit, he fail to play as directed (Laws 66, 67) he is liable to the penalty for revoke (Law 84), unless such play be corrected before the trick be turned and quitted.

LEADS OUT OF TURN

76. If *an* adversary of the declarer lead out of turn, the declarer may treat the card so led as exposed or may call a suit as soon as it is the turn of either adversary to lead. Should they lead simultaneously, the lead from the proper hand stands, and the other card is exposed.

77. If the declarer lead out of turn, either from his own hand or dummy, he incurs no penalty, but he may not rectify the error unless directed to do so by an adversary.* If the second hand play, the lead is accepted.

78. If an adversary of the declarer lead out of turn, and the declarer follow either from his own hand or dummy, the *lead is accepted*. If the declarer before playing refuse to accept the lead, the leader may be penalized as provided in Law 76.

79. If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it, the penalty is paid.

CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR

80. Should the fourth hand, not being dummy or declarer, play before the second, the latter may be required to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick. In such case, if the second hand be void of the suit led, the declarer in lieu of any other penalty may call upon the second hand to play the highest card of any designated suit. If he name a

* The rule in Law 50c as to consultations governs the right of adversaries to consult as to whether such direction be given.

suit of which the second hand is void, the penalty is paid.*

81. *When any one, except dummy, omits playing to a trick, and such error is not corrected until he has played to the next, the declarer or either of his adversaries, as the case may be, may claim a new deal; should either decide that the deal stand, the surplus card (at the end of the hand) is considered played to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke therein.†*

82. *When any one, except dummy, plays two or more cards to the same trick and the mistake is not corrected, he is answerable for any consequent revokes he may make. When the error is detected during the play, the tricks may be counted face downward, to see if any contain more than four cards; should this be the case, the trick which contains a surplus card or cards may be examined and such card or cards restored to the original holder.‡*

* Should the declarer play third hand before the second hand, the fourth hand may without penalty play before his partner.

† As to the right of adversaries to consult, see Law 50c.

‡ Either adversary may decide which card shall be considered played to the trick which contains more than four cards, but such decision shall not affect the winning or losing of the trick.

THE REVOKE*

83. A revoke occurs when a player, other than dummy, holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit. It becomes an established revoke when the trick in which it occurs is turned and quitted by the rightful winner† (*i. e.*, the hand removed from the trick after it has been turned face downward on the table), or when either the revoking player or his partner, whether in turn or otherwise, leads or plays to the following trick.

84. The penalty for each established revoke is:

- (a) When the declarer revokes, he cannot score for tricks and his adversaries add 100 points to their score in the honor column *for each revoke*, in addition to any penalty to which they may be entitled for his failure to make good his declaration.
- (b) When either of the adversaries revokes, the declarer *for the first revoke may either score 100 points in his honor column or take three tricks from his opponents and add them to his own.*‡

* They may enable him to win a game and if that game conclude the rubber, give him the 250 points bonus.

† The value of the three tricks, doubled or redoubled, as the case may be, is counted in the trick score.

‡ The dummy may advise the declarer which penalty to exact.

Such tricks may assist the declarer to make good his declaration,* but shall not entitle him to *any further* bonus in the honor column, *by reason of* the declaration *having been* doubled or redoubled, nor to a slam or little slam not otherwise obtained.† (*See Laws 7, 8, and 58.*) *For each subsequent revoke he adds 100 points to his honor score.*

The value of their honors is the only score that can be made by a revoking side.

85. A player may ask his partner if he have a card of the suit which he has renounced; should the question be asked before the trick be turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish a revoke, and the error may be corrected unless the question be answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner have led or played to the following trick.

85a. Should the dummy leave the table during the play, he may ask his adversaries to protect him from revokes during his absence; such protection is generally called "the courtesies of the table" or "the courtesies due an absentee."

* See Law 75.

† Except as provided in Law 85.

If he make such request the penalty *for a revoke made by the declarer during the dummy's absence may not be enforced* unless in due season an adversary have asked the declarer whether he have a card of the suit he has renounced.

86. If a player correct his mistake in time to save a revoke, any player or players who have followed him may withdraw his or their cards and substitute others, and the cards so withdrawn are not exposed. If the player in fault be one of the declarer's adversaries, the card played in error is exposed, and the declarer may call it whenever he pleases, or he may require the offender to play his highest or lowest card of the suit to the trick.

86*a*. If the player in fault be the declarer, either adversary may require him to play the highest or lowest card of the suit in which he has renounced, provided both his adversaries have played to the current trick; but this penalty may not be exacted from the declarer when he is fourth in hand, nor can it be enforced at all from the dummy.

87. At the end of the play the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed, the claim may be urged and proved if possible; but no proof is necessary and the claim is established if, after it is made, the accused player or his partner mix the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries.

88. *A claim that a revoke has been made cannot be allowed after the cards have been cut for the following deal, or when the deal concludes the rubber, after the score has been made up and agreed upon or after the cards have been cut for any purpose connected with the next rubber.*

89. Should both sides revoke, the only score permitted is for honors. In such case, if one side revoke more than once, the penalty of 100 points for each extra revoke is scored by the other side.

GENERAL LAWS

90. A trick turned and quitted may not be looked at (except under Law 82) until the end of the play. The penalty for the vio-

lation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honor score.

91. Any player during the play of a trick or after the four cards are played, and before the trick is turned and quitted, may demand that the cards be placed before their respective players.

92. When an adversary of the declarer, before his partner plays, calls attention to the trick, either by saying it is his, or, without being requested to do so, by naming his card or drawing it toward him, the declarer may require such partner to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick.

93. An adversary of the declarer may call his partner's attention to the fact that he is about to play or lead out of turn; but if, during the play, he make any unauthorized reference to any incident of the play, the declarer may call a suit from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead. If the dummy similarly offend, either adversary may call a lead when it is the next turn of the declarer to lead from either hand.

94. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

95. *If the declarer concede one or more tricks and the concession be accepted, such trick or tricks belong to the adversaries even if it would have been impossible for the declarer to lose such trick or tricks had the hand been played out.**

If an adversary of the declarer concede a trick or tricks, such concession is binding if agreed to at the time by the partner of the conceding player. Silence shall be regarded as consent.

NEW CARDS

96. Unless a pack be imperfect, no player has the right to call for one new pack. When fresh cards are demanded, two packs must be furnished. When they are produced during a rubber, the adversaries of the player demanding them have the choice of the new cards. If it be the beginning of a new rub-

* Unless before the acceptance of the concession, the dummy, who has not looked at any cards in the hand of an adversary, demands that the deal be played out. (See Law 60k.)

ber, the dealer, whether he or one of his adversaries call for the new cards, has the choice. New cards cannot be substituted after the pack has been cut for a new deal.

97. A card or cards torn or marked must be replaced by agreement or new cards furnished.

BYSTANDERS

98. While a bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question, he should not say anything unless appealed to; and if he make any remark which calls attention to an oversight affecting the score, or to the exaction of a penalty, he is liable to be called upon by the players to pay the stakes (not extras) lost.

ETIQUETTE OF AUCTION

In the game of Auction slight intimations convey much information. *The laws fix penalties for an offense.* To offend against etiquette is more serious than to offend against a law; for in the latter case the offender is

subject to the prescribed penalties; in the former his adversaries are without redress.

1. Declarations should be made in a simple manner, thus: "one heart," "one no trump," "pass," "double"; they should be made orally and not by gesture.

2. Aside from his legitimate declaration, a player should not *indicate* by word or gesture the nature of his hand, or his *approval or disapproval* of a play, bid, or double.

3. If a player demand that the cards be placed, he should do so for his own information and not to call his partner's attention to any card or play.

4. An opponent of the declarer should not lead until the preceding trick has been turned and quitted; nor, after having led a winning card, should he draw another from his hand before his partner has played to the current trick.

5. A card should not be played with such emphasis as to draw attention to it, nor should a player detach one card from his hand and subsequently play another.

6. A player should not purposely incur a penalty because he is willing to pay it, nor should he make a second revoke to conceal a first.

7. Conversation during the play should be avoided, as it may annoy players at the table or at other tables in the room.

8. The dummy should not leave his seat to watch his partner play. He should not call attention to the score nor to any card or cards that he or the other players hold.

9. If a player say, "I have the rest," or any words indicating that the remaining tricks, or any number thereof, are his, and one or both of the other players expose his or their cards, or request him to play out the hand, he should not allow any information so obtained to influence his play.

10. A player having been cut out of one table should not seek admission in another unless willing to cut for the privilege of entry.

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